

**“I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY AND I AM SAYING IT”: COLLABORATION,
COLLAGE, AND THE MEETING OF INDETERMINACIES IN AMERICAN AVANT-
GARDE PERFORMANCES OF THE 1960s**

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Elizabeth A. Hoover, PhD

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When approaching the 1960s, histories of the United States commonly emphasize the dynamic movements of the decade such as fighting for equality, traveling through space and moving upwards in “the Great Society.” These movements captivated both the eyes and ears of Americans through a collage of television, radio, records, newspapers, magazines and journals—a multi-mediated culture that fashioned new political platforms for change. Whereas the roles of popular musicians during the 1960s have been well researched, investigations of American avant-garde music have been limited to studies of individual composers and their compositional methods, largely ignoring these musicians’ role in the germination of a collective consciousness that questioned established aesthetic paradigms and cultivated unique exchanges between multiple forms of artistic media. This study focuses on the so-called “New York School”—a diverse group comprised of, among others, John Cage, Earle Brown, Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff, and David Tudor. I reassess the cultural, social and aesthetic importance of these figures by examining their work in multimedia collaborations.

I offer three case studies each organized around an avant-garde event whose premiere performance and/or subsequent renditions marked the 1960s. Chapter 2 elucidates the interplay

of indeterminate and determined relations between collaborators in John Cage's and Merce Cunningham's *Variations V* by conceptualizing a "collage of authorities" that thematizes a Derridean play of *différance*. In Chapters 3 and 4, I detail the textual and perceptual collage that reinforces a Bergsonian notion of order in the "feedback conditions" of Earle Brown's *Calder Piece*. In Chapter 5, I unravel and analyze the surfaces of Merce Cunningham's choreography, Robert Rauschenberg's décor and Morton Feldman's music, which together creates a performative collage in the ballet *Summerspace*. I argue that, as multitudinous collages, these collaborations continued the modernist legacy of questioning conventional musical (and visual) languages while simultaneously projecting traits we now associate with postmodernism, such as theatricality and potentiality through variously constituted indeterminacies. Questioning the very grounds of mainstream communication, these dynamic events offered their own terms for linking politics and aesthetics during the 1960s.

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PREFACE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Why are avant-garde musicians and artists routinely cast into the shadows of American history? Does this community interact with American mainstream culture during times of upheaval and historical change? How does the avant-garde reconsider populist notions of politics? In my dissertation I investigate these questions by reassessing the combined social and aesthetic importance of avant-garde musicians and music in the United States during the 1960s. Studies of avant-garde music of the time have been limited to composer-dominated discourse, largely ignoring the germination of a collective consciousness that cultivated exchanges between multiple forms of artistic media in performance. My study, on the other hand, offers an innovative cultural-theoretical approach for the investigation of such collaborative interaction on the part of the American avant-garde during the 1960s.

I argue that avant-garde music challenged, in its own terms, the grounds of communication that called for action and change in mainstream America during the 1960s. Through this questioning, avant-garde music bridged aesthetic and political concerns. Unlike European avant-garde composers, such as Boulez and Stockhausen who maintained compositional control through their serialist and aleatoric techniques, American experimental avant-gardists spearheaded by John Cage, challenged the conventional language of music by way of multimedia collaborations that depended on principally indeterminate action. These

collaborations not only disrupted conventional musical language through graphic notation and the dismemberment of familiar styles of Western art music, but also ruptured relationships between the composer and the performer, the performer and the audience, and the audience and composer.

Such ideas of musical form and content hearkened back to politically engaged pre-WWII modernist threads of thought while simultaneously experimenting with concepts that would later underwrite many postmodernist projects. This intermediary position balances precariously in between modernism and postmodernism as a result of new considerations of collage that are textual, perceptual and performative. In doing so, these performances acted as musical forms of action that entered the dynamic dialogue of the '60s.

The purpose of my project is to unveil the terms with which the avant-garde disrupted the divide between aesthetics and politics. I offer three case studies each organized around an avant-garde event whose premiere performance and/or subsequent performances marked the decade between 1958 and 1967: John Cage's and Merce Cunningham's *Variations V*, Earle Brown's *Calder Piece*, and Merce Cunningham's, Robert Rauschenberg's and Merce Cunningham's *Summerspace*. Even though as largely musical works, these have usually been attributed to individual composers, I am concerned with the manifold relations between aural and visual media in each performance. As a result, I consider composers, musicians, dancers, choreographers, filmmakers, engineers, and technicians as equally important in discovering the active potentiality of performance. To date, examinations of *Variations V*, *Calder Piece*, and *Summerspace* have been limited to one or another type of medium; and, in the field of musicology, they are acknowledged through brief descriptive accounts, but never in terms of *meaning*—cultural, social, political or otherwise. The exploration of avant-garde performances

as principally multi-mediated, however, firmly positions them within the multi-mediated culture of the United States during the 1960s.

1.1 AVANT-GARDE PERFORMANCE IN AMERICA: KOSTELANETZ'S TAXONOMY

By the 1960s, the term “performance” in regards to the American avant-garde came to embrace a multitude of artistic means and modes. Although the symphony, ballet and theater remained cultural staples of traditional performance, musical or otherwise, the crossing of artistic media in avant-garde performance often obscured the genre of the event at hand. One of the first personalities to take on the challenge of categorizing the multitudinous state of avant-garde performance in the United States was the critic, artist and advocate of the American avant-garde during the 1950s and 60s, Richard Kostelanetz. In 1965 Kostelanetz published *The New American Arts* in order to offer a current but “definitive statement on avant-garde activity in America.” He quickly realized, however, that the *organization* of this statement did not capture the slippery nature of artistic media in performance. According to Kostelanetz:

A major problem of that earlier book, I now recognize, lay precisely in my decision, as editor, to split the critical work into categories—cinema, fiction, dance, poetry, painting, theatre, and music. I was then only dimly aware that so much that is currently artistically advanced today straddles, if not transcends these traditional divisions...”¹

To remedy the problem, Kostelanetz created and published *The Theatre of Mixed Means* only two years later; a term and taxonomy created to capture the collaborative nature of the arts

¹ Richard Kostelanetz, *The Theatre of Mixed Means: An Introduction to Happenings, Kinetic Environments, and Other Mixed Means* (New York: The Dial Press, Inc., 1968), xii-xiii.

in performance during the 1960s, as different from traditional means of performance in which one art reigns supreme:

The most interesting recent development in American theatre represents such a great departure from traditional practice that it has acquired a plethora of new names: “happenings,” “the new theatre,” “events,” “activities,” “painter’s theatre,” “kinetic theatre” or “action theatre.” A designation such as *happening* is a totally inadequate description of a movement that includes totally planned, precisely executed, repeatable staged performances; *events* is too vague and general, *theatre without words* too negative, and *the art of radical juxtaposition* too platitudinous. I prefer to christen the entire movement “the Theatre of Mixed Means,” a term that encompasses various strains of activity and yet makes the crucial distinction between this theatre and traditional literary mono-mean practice...²

Due to the varied nature of media in the Theatre of Mixed Means, in his book, Kostelanetz distinguishes four genres of the “movement”: pure happenings, staged happenings, staged performances, and kinetic environments. Pure happenings are most variable in time and action, a genre in which “the script is vague enough to allow unexpected events to occur in an unpredictable succession.”³ In such performances, a general purpose is usually outlined; however, the performers and/or the audience may improvise actions because the identity of “official participants” is not outlined in detail. Like pure happenings, staged happenings also incorporate variable action and last for an indeterminate amount of time. Unlike pure happenings, however, which may take place in any type of environment, staged happenings occur within a closed space such as a stage or theater. While happenings—staged or pure—are not planned in action or time, kinetic environments “are more closely planned, their space is more specifically designed and constricted, and the behavior of the participants (or components) is more precisely programmed.”⁴ However, in kinetic environments restrictions are not placed

² Ibid, xi.

³ Ibid, 4.

⁴ Ibid, 6.

on elements of time and form, and the audience is encouraged to take a more participatory role. The most controlled genre of Kostelanetz's Theatre of Mixed Means is staged performances: predetermined events in which the audience's role is purely observational, aspects of action and time are clearly defined, and the performance space and form is specifically outlined. Despite the similarity of staged performances to traditional theatre, "new theatre thoroughly mixes the media of communication" in staged performances.⁵

Kostelanetz remedies the problem of organization in *The New American Arts* by considering a new set of parameters for the categorization of avant-garde performance. This taxonomy, differentiated by time, space, action and form, is the first to re-evaluate the classification of performance based on traditional genres allied to *one* artistic media.

1.2 PERFORMANCE AND PROBLEMS OF HISTORICAL PERIODIZATION

In *The Theatre of Mixed Means*, Kostelanetz categorizes avant-garde performance in recognition of its multi-mediation in the 1960s. Beginning in the 1960s, however, the notion of performance spilled beyond the realm of the arts to capture the interests of historians, anthropologists, linguists, cultural theorists and sociologists alike. This is thoroughly demonstrated by the most recent piece of scholarship committed to critically capturing the history of performance and its theory, *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, by Marvin Carlson. In his second edition of the book, Carlson outlines many approaches in search of a comprehensive definition of performance, including: "Performance of Culture: Anthropological and Ethnographic Approaches";

⁵ Ibid, 7.

“Performance in Society: Sociological and Psychological Approaches”; “Performance of Language: Linguistic Approaches”; “Performance in Its Historical Context”; “Performance and Identity”; and, “Performance and the Postmodern.” As Carlson attempts to embrace a host of perspectives on performance, however, the diversity of these perspectives ultimately nullifies any definitive understanding of performance: “Performance by its nature resists conclusions, just as it resists the sort of definitions, boundaries, and limits so useful to traditional academic writing and academic structures.”⁶ Instead, his quest for a definition ultimately transforms into an awareness of his own performance as a writer.

Although Carlson is unable to bring performance into focus under one lens, his critical introduction inadvertently illuminates a route for the study of avant-garde performance during the 1960s in his discussion of “Performance and the Postmodern,” subtitled “Postmodernism, Poststructuralism, and Theatricality.”⁷ In this rather brief section Carlson compares the modern and the postmodern notions of performance. Even though he indicates a transition from one attitude to another he fails to historicize it.

The challenge posed to the aesthetics of presence by poststructuralism challenged...performance’s modernist and essentialist claim of distinction from the other arts in general and theatre in particular—a claim based upon the presence of the performing body. Yet as this modernist view of performance was fading it was gradually replaced by a postmodernist view of performance...⁸

In which years did this fading occur? And, how did the modernist vocabulary change? Was this change severe? Carlson admits a transition from modernist to postmodernist views of performance, but he does not commit this “fading” to a specific historical periodization.

⁶ Marvin Carlson, *Performance: Critical Introduction*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2004), 206.

⁷ Ibid, 137-156.

⁸ Ibid, 148.

In *Avant-Garde Performance: Live Events and Electronic Technologies*, Günter Berghaus attempts to historicize the rise of postmodernism and views the increase in “radical” treatments of performance in the late 1960s as a result of changes in society:

It was in this situation, towards the late 1960s or early 1970s, that postmodernism became a major, and then the dominant, trend in Western art. The complex network of economic, social, and intellectual forces that in the postwar period had allowed a last flourishing of Modernist art, had undergone a profound transformation...Both as a theory and as an artistic practice, this new movement was *concerned with power structures and domination strategies in the social world and investigated how these give rise to cultural discourses. The aim was to expose the politics of representation in the new media of communication and to show how orthodox cultural practices functioned as tools in the hand of hegemonic social groups.*

The postmodern condition of Western societies in the 1960s and 1970s was closely linked to the new electronic culture, which had demolished the concept of the individual, fixed in time and space, or moving in a linear fashion from A to B. Hegemonic systems of vision and representation had become fragmented; singularity of viewpoint had been broken up.⁹

Although Berghaus is not mentioned in Carlson’s *Performance: Critical Introduction* Carlson seems to accept the same historical periodization. After recognizing a gradual transition from a modernist view of performance to a postmodernist one, he immediately points to art historian, Henry Sayre, and his book, *The Object of Performance* which postulates a decisive break of post-modernism from modernism in the late 1960s.¹⁰ Despite the subtitle of the book, *The American Avant-Garde since 1970*, Sayre, like Berghaus, acknowledges a shift to postmodernist tendencies in the 1960s:

⁹ Günter Berghaus, *Avant-Garde Performance: Live Events and Electronic Technologies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 71. Emphasis my own: Berghaus points to the undercurrent that I address in my dissertation. He questions how orthodox cultural practices function as tools of hegemony and highlights the role of postmodern practices in giving rise to new cultural discourses that are concerned with “power structures.” This is exactly the role I argue the avant-garde endeavored by creating multimedia collaborations, and is what I mean when I state they were forces of action in American culture during the 1960s.

¹⁰ *Avant-Garde Performance: Live Events and Electronic Technologies*, by Günter Berghaus and *Performance: Critical Introduction*, by Marvin Carlson were published in the same year, 2005.

If I have focused my attention on developments since 1970, I have nevertheless tried not to ignore important work done in this country before that year. Whenever it has seemed to me that earlier work required attention (*the collaborations of John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, and Merce Cunningham, for instance*, or the innovations of the Judson Dance Theater), I have discussed it, sometimes at considerable length.¹¹

Sayre's perspective on the transition between modernism and postmodernism is a riposte to the influential essay by Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in which Fried defends modernist worship of the art object and its perpetual presence. Sayre challenges Fried's vehement dismissal of theater ("*Art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theatre.*"¹²) mainly on historical grounds:

By dismissing the immanentist position of Fried and acknowledging implicitly or explicitly its theatrical or performative bias, the work of the American avant-garde since 1970 has consistently engaged history. Fried's very articulation of the problem violates the aesthetic position of this avant-garde, and reveals the depth of his misunderstanding...Determined, as it is, by the local and topical, the events of history itself, and by such things as the forms and operations of mechanical reproduction, from photography to television, that record this history, the art of the avant-garde is always in process, always engaged. It is, furthermore, purposefully undecidable. Its meanings are explosive, ricocheting and fragmenting throughout its audience. The work becomes a situation, full of suggestive potentialities, rather than a self-contained whole, determined and final.¹³

By placing emphasis on performance in relation to the avant-garde just prior to and after 1970, Sayre establishes theatricality as an intrinsic quality of postmodernism.¹⁴ As Sayre

¹¹ Henry Sayre, *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde since 1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), xiv. Emphasis my own: these individuals represent some key "players" in the multimedia collaborations of my dissertation.

¹² Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in *Art in Theory: 1900-1990*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 831. Emphasis by Fried.

¹³ Sayre, 7.

¹⁴ Ironically, Sayre supports this with a quote by Fried himself, stated in 1982: "In the years since 'Art and Objecthood' was written, the theatrical has assumed a host of new guises and has acquired a new name: postmodernism." This quote is taken from Michael Fried, "How Modernism Works: A Response to T.J. Clark," *Critical Inquiry* 9 (September 1982): 229, n. 17. Sayre furthers his argument in regards to the theatricality of postmodernism with a quote by Howard Fox: "Theatricality may be considered that propensity in the visual arts for a work to reveal itself within the mind of the beholder as something other than what it is known empirically to be. This is precisely antithetical to the Modern ideal of the wholly manifest, self-sufficient object; and theatricality may

explains, the theatrical and performative role of postmodern art came to the foreground because “the site of presence in art had shifted from art’s object to art’s audience, from the textual or plastic to the experiential.”¹⁵ Thus, Sayre explicitly relates the rise of postmodernism around 1970 to a reformed idea of theatricality which focused on audience perception and experience, multimedia interaction, and new conceptualizations—as well as evaluations—of *time* and *space* which replaced the narrative function and readings of traditional theater. This new theatricality placed emphasis on unique spaces formed by the bodies of the audience and the performers: spaces that emphasized *the moment* and demonstrated a questioning of presence similar to the “challenge posed to the aesthetics of presence by poststructuralism,” highlighted in Carlson’s comparison of modern and postmodern notions of performance. It switched the perspective from the art *object* to the *objecthood* of performance.

I believe tracing this changed perspective is critical to the examination of avant-garde collaborations whose existence is also dependent on the moment of performance. These collaborations feature multimedia interaction and indeterminate parameters which allow for many potential relationships between the audience and performers: characteristics of Sayre’s theatrical view of postmodern art. As Carlson, Berghaus, and Sayre demonstrate, the curious move from modernist to postmodernist notions of art poses a challenge to historical periodization. In my dissertation, I argue that, although postmodern tendencies may be traced to the 1960s, multimedia collaborations of the decade exhibit a peculiar position in between the

be the single most pervasive property of post-Modern art. This quote appears in Howard N. Fox, *Metaphor: New Projects by Contemporary Sculptors* (Washington, D.C.: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982), 16.

¹⁵ Sayre, 5.

postmodern and the modern, in which emphasis turns away from the art object and towards performativity and the ephemerality of performance.

1.3 POSTMODERNISM AND MUSIC

The question of postmodernism in music is a recent exploration in musicology, taken up most fervently by Jonathan Kramer. In, “Beyond Unity: Toward an Understanding of Musical Postmodernism,” a chapter in *Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz since 1945*, Kramer explains the ambiguity of the term, “postmodernism” in relation to music history; a predicament paralleled in its application to architecture, art history, literary theory and social criticism.¹⁶ In these fields, a transition from modernism to postmodernism is hard to decipher; and the “problem becomes particularly acute when we understand postmodernism as neither a straightforward rejection nor simply an extension of modernism, but rather as having aspects of both.”¹⁷ Despite this predicament, Kramer does find ways to differentiate between the two. To locate the postmodern, he notes David Harvey’s *The Condition of Postmodernity*, in which “Harvey believes that postmodernism is distinguished not only by a rejection of totalizing meta-narratives but also by an acceptance of discontinuity over continuity, difference over similarity, and indeterminacy

¹⁶ He also discusses postmodernism and music in, Jonathan Kramer, “The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism,” in *Postmodern Music: Postmodern Thought*, ed. Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁷ Jonathan Kramer, “Beyond Unity: Toward an Understanding of Musical Postmodernism,” in *Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz Since 1945*, ed. Elizabeth West Marvin and Richard Herman (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 20.

over rational logic.”¹⁸ This rejection of meta-narratives corresponds to a dismissal of the organic unity central to modernist (as well as Romantic) works, and a welcoming of chaotic events. Kramer distinguishes modernism as a time when “composers sought new languages in uncompromising and challenging works of great purity, complexity, and originality.” He also emphasizes the importance of individual expression on the part of the composer.

In the middle of the twentieth century composers in the United States “sought new languages” with which to create new music, a primary facet of modernism. In addition, however, they also rejected totalizing narratives, incorporated differing levels of indeterminacy, and welcomed discontinuity: there is “neither a straightforward rejection nor simply an extension of modernism” in their music. However, in exhibiting aspects of modernism and postmodernism—what Kramer finds problematic in establishing a definite distinction between the two styles—it is hard to state if this music demonstrates the beginning of an “era” of postmodernism or the end of modernism.¹⁹ As a result, even after the 1950s:

...the avant-garde music of the ‘60s was not yet...postmodern, although it differed in some fundamental ways from earlier high modernist music. Part of the reason ‘60s music was still modernist was that it still accepted—indeed, strove for—textual unity, although of a new kind: consistency more than organicism.²⁰

The closest that music in the ‘60s came to portraying a completely postmodern aesthetic was in the work of John Cage. According to Kramer:

The music of Cage came closer to breaking with its modernist antecedents than did its European counterparts. Particularly in the ‘60s Cage created and promoted a music that was chaotic in one sense, since in it no event responds to any other event, but not at all

¹⁸ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 8-9. In Kramer, “Beyond Unity,” 21.

¹⁹ In his essay for *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*, Kramer lists sixteen “characteristics of postmodern music,” the first of which is: “Postmodern music is not simply a repudiation of modernism or its continuation, but has aspects of both a break and an extension” (Kramer 2002, 16).

²⁰ Kramer, “Beyond Unity,” 30.

chaotic in another sense; it was a music if not of organicism, then at least of overwhelming consistency, at least as usually performed...Because of its consistent textual unity, the music of the Duchamp-Cage-Warhol axis was finally more modernist than postmodernist but—because of its lack of integrated form—nearer to postmodernism than were its European counterparts.²¹

I argue, however, that the “textual unity” Kramer finds in Cage’s music of the 1960s, is caught precariously in between modernism and postmodernism precisely because collaborative events by the Cagean avant-garde exhibited the postmodern tendency to collage and be collaged. Kramer even highlights the importance of collage as a postmodern aesthetic (even though you may trace it as a characteristic of many centuries) in his chapter:

Pastiche and collage, primary forms of postmodern discourse, encourage the perceiver to make his or her own perceptual sense of a work of art. In particular, the less a work is textually unified, the more the perceiver must assume the burden of rendering his or her perception of it coherent....The resulting multiplicity of responses suggests that there are as many pieces as there are listeners, an idea thoroughly appropriate to postmodern thinking.²²

Throughout each chapter of my dissertation, I demonstrate how different approaches to collage in multimedia collaborations by the “Cagean” avant-garde caused disruption(s), and invited the viewer, as well as the performer, to partake in making “his or her own perceptual sense of a work of art.” All of these methods of collage feature theatricality and a meeting of indeterminacies that resulted in a deliberate tension between unity and discontinuity; modernism and postmodernism.²³

²¹ Ibid, 31.

²² Kramer, 28.

²³ Björn Heile investigates the juxtaposition between collage and compositional control in the work of Mauricio Kagel. The juxtaposition is also positioned between modernism (compositional control) and postmodernism (collage). He examines Mauricio Kagel’s own writings on postmodernism as well as his compositions, *Sur scène* (1961), *Ludwig van* (1970), *Die Stücke der Windrose für Salonorcheter* (1988-94). Heile considers “modernism/postmodernism logic relation in the Bakhtinian sense (see Bakhtin 1984, and idem 1986a): that is, as fundamentally intertwined and interacting, rather than opposing and mutually exclusive principles. There is no definite antagonism between modernism and postmodernism, nor is there a straightforward chronological distinction: postmodern and modern impulses occur simultaneously. If we take the distinctions discussed above as

1.4 THE AVANT-GARDE AND “THE POLITICS OF AESTHETICS”

The same formal techniques and attitudes that blur modernist and postmodernist cultures—collage, theatricality, indeterminacy and the involvement of the performer and audience—are also vital in reassessing the aesthetic and political function of the American avant-garde during the 1960s.

In his treatise *The Politics of Aesthetics* French philosopher, Jacques Rancière, distinguishes between “three major regimes of identification” of Western traditions of art. These three categories of identification originate in different time periods throughout history, however, each continued to exist in the twentieth century, and persist in the arts today. In the first category, an ethical regime of images, “art is not identified as such but is subsumed under the question of images.”²⁴ This regime may be dated back to Plato’s distinction between a simulacra of images, responsible merely for imitating appearance and the “true arts,” or, as summarized by Gabriel Rockhill in the “Glossary of Technical Terms” for *The Politics of Aesthetics*, “by arranging images according to their origin (the model copied) and their end or purpose (the uses they are put to and the effects they produce), the ethical regime separates artistic simulacra from the true

guidelines, it becomes obvious that few works of art lie exclusively on one side of the divide” (288). He finds “Another Bakhtinian relation occurring in recent musical practices is closely related to the question of unity/heterogeneity: the dialogics of collage and compositional control. Collage, although in chronological terms a modernist innovation, can be regarded as a postmodernist principle entailing the abdication of authorship in favor of intertextual references and heterogeneity (see Watkins 1994). Compositional control can be understood as a modernist principle, ensuring the unity, the master trope of modernist aesthetics...The conflicts and tensions between the two principles of collage and control, and more generally of heterogeneity and unity, run through the history of twentieth-century music” (288). I follow these arguments by Heile in my exploration of the tensions in multimedia collaborations. Björn Heile, “Collage vs. Compositional Control: The Interdependency of Modernist and Postmodernist Approaches in the Work of Mauricio Kagel,” in *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought* ed. Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner (New York: Routledge, 2002).

²⁴ Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: the distribution of the sensible* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 20.

arts, i.e., imitation modeled on the ‘truth’ whose final aim is to educate the citizenry in accordance with the distribution of occupations in the community.”²⁵

Ranciere’s second regime of the arts is the poetic or representative regime, “which emerged out of Aristotle’s critique of Plato and established a series of axioms that were eventually codified in the Classical Age.”²⁶ Although this regime maintains the image, the representative regime also breaks from the ethical regime’s employment of image via mimesis. According to Ranciere, “it is the *substance* of the poem, the fabrication of a plot arranging actions that represent the activities of men, which is the foremost issue, to the detriment of the *essence* of the image, a copy examined with regard to its model.”²⁷ This mimesis of representation, however, “is not an artistic process but a regime of visibility regarding the arts.” Visibility not only “renders the arts autonomous...[but is] also what links this autonomy to a general order of occupations and ways of doing and making.”²⁸ The regime of representation thus offers an analogy to societal hierarchies detailed by Ranciere: “The representative primacy of action over characters or of narration over description, the hierarchy of genres according to the dignity of their subject matter, and the very primacy of the art of speaking, of speech in actuality, all of these elements figure into the analogy with a fully hierarchical vision of the community.”²⁹ The representative regime expands beyond a reproduction of reality and instead follows “a [hierarchical] series of axioms that define the arts’ proper forms.”³⁰

²⁵ Ibid, 86.

²⁶ Ibid, 91.

²⁷ Ibid, 21.

²⁸ Ibid, 22.

²⁹ Ibid, 22.

³⁰ Ibid, 91.

Most pertinent to my discussion of American avant-garde multimedia collaborations in the 1960s is the third category, or Ranciere's aesthetic regime of the arts. According to Rockhill, "although traces of this regime are already to be found in such authors as Vico and Cervantes, it has only come to play a dominant role in the last two centuries."³¹ Unlike the representative regime, in which the arts adhere to a certain hierarchical order, "the aesthetic regime of the arts is the regime that strictly identifies art in the singular and frees it from any specific rule, from any hierarchy of the arts, subject matter, and genres."³² Thus, "the identification of art no longer occurs via a division within ways of doing and making, but it is based on distinguishing a sensible mode of being specific to artistic products."³³ Whereas the poetic or representative regime of the arts depends on the regime of the visible, the aesthetic regime of the arts depends on a regime of the sensible, "which is extricated from its ordinary connections and is inhabited by a heterogeneous power, the power of a form of thought that has become foreign to itself: a product identical with something not produced, knowledge transformed into non-knowledge, *logos* identical with pathos, the *intention of the unintentional*, etc."³⁴

In his study discussed above Jonathan Kramer finds it difficult to pinpoint a decisive break between modernist and postmodernist styles of music when "postmodernism [is considered] as neither a straightforward rejection nor simply an extension of modernism..."³⁵ In direct relation to this quandary is the notion of the aesthetic regime of the arts. Ranciere sees this regime as operative in both modernist and postmodernist thought and asserts that:

³¹ Ibid, 81.

³² Ibid, 23

³³ Ibid, 22

³⁴ Ibid, 23. Emphasis my own.

³⁵ Jonathan Kramer, "Beyond Unity," 20.

Postmodernism, in a sense, was simply the name under whose guise certain artists and thinkers realized what modernism had been: a desperate attempt to establish a ‘distinctive feature of art’ by linking it to a simple teleology of historical evolution and rupture. There was not really a need, moreover, to make this late recognition of a fundamental fact of the aesthetic regime of the arts into an actual temporal break, the real end of a historical period. (28)

That is, avant-garde contributed to the creation of modernist and postmodernist notions of art; it should not be thought of as monolithic in its political potential. “Although the “avant-garde defines the type of subject suitable to the modernist [and postmodernist] vision and appropriate, according to this vision, for connecting the aesthetic to the political,” Ranciere suggests, there are “two ideas” of the avant-garde, linked to the representative and aesthetic regimes of art respectively.

On one hand, there is the topographical and military notion of the force that marches in the lead, that has a clear understanding of the movement, embodies its forces, determines the direction of historical evolution, and chooses subjective political orientations. In short, there is the idea that links political subjectivity to a certain form: the party, an advanced detachment that derives its ability to lead from its ability to read and interpret the signs of history.³⁶

This “strategic” idea of the avant-garde may be linked to politically motivated art works and performances which operate on an apparent or deliberate level, imitating representations of politics in mainstream society. Through this imitation, such art may be categorized within the representational regime. There exists, however, an idea of the avant-garde which relates to the aesthetic regime, as detailed by Ranciere:

On the other hand, there is another idea of the avant-garde that, in accordance with Schiller’s model, is rooted in the aesthetic anticipation of the future. If the concept of the avant-garde has any meaning in the aesthetic regime of the arts, it is on this side of things, not on the side of the advanced detachments of artistic innovation but on the side of invention of sensible forms and material structures for a life to come.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid, 29.

³⁷ Ibid.

These two ideas of the avant-garde—the representational (or strategic) and aesthetic (or critical)—correspond for Ranciere to “two different ideas of political subjectivity”: the archi-political intelligence that sums up the essential conditions for change, and the meta-political idea of global political subjectivity, the idea of the *potentiality* inherent in the innovative sensible modes of experience that anticipate a community to come.”³⁸ It is in the acts of both of these subjectivities that Ranciere’s definition of politics resides. He states, “The essence of politics thus resides in acts of subjectivization that separate society from itself by challenging the natural order of bodies in the name of equality and polemically reconfiguring the distribution of the sensible.”³⁹ The multimedia events I examine in my dissertation engage in their socio-political surroundings by enforcing a meta-political idea of global political subjectivity contingent on the potentiality of the sensible.

Ranciere’s phrase, “distribution of the sensible,” or “the implicit laws governing the sensible order that parcels out places and forms of participation in a common world by first establishing the modes of perception within which these are inscribed,” relates directly to aesthetics.⁴⁰ Although all three regimes of art take part in this distribution, in its emphasis on potentiality, the aesthetic regime plays a unique and significant role in relation to politics, as explained in part two of Ranciere’s *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*.

In the ninth chapter of *Dissensus*, “The Aesthetic Revolution and Its Outcomes” Ranciere demonstrates how Schiller’s “original scene of aesthetics,” built on the paradox and promise of an art of beauty and that of life, is manifested in the politics of aesthetics, or the aesthetic regime of art. As Ranciere underlines: “To understand the ‘politics’ proper to the aesthetic regime of art

³⁸ Ibid, 30.

³⁹ Ibid, 90.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 85.

is to grasp the way that autonomy and heteronomy are linked in Schiller's formula, which consists of three points:⁴¹

First, the autonomy staged by the aesthetic regime of art is not that of the work of art but of a mode of experience. Second, the 'aesthetic experience' is one of heterogeneity, such that, for the subject of that experience it is also the dismissal of a certain autonomy. Third, the object of that experience is 'aesthetic', insofar as it is not, or at least not only, art.⁴²

To clarify his three points, Ranciere refers to a spectator viewing a Greek statue—the *Juno Ludovisi*. He relates what happens between the spectator and Greek statue:

The goddess and the spectator, the free play and the free appearance, are caught up together in a specific sensorium, canceling the oppositions of activity and passivity, will and resistance. The 'autonomy of art' and the 'promise of politics' are not counterposed. The autonomy is the autonomy of the experience, not of the work of art. In other words, the artwork participates in the sensorium of autonomy inasmuch as it is not a work of art.⁴³

Ranciere's emphasis on the suspension of experience, or the "sensorium" links directly to the close ties between art and life: "In the aesthetic regime of art, art is art to the extent that it is something else than art. It is always 'aestheticized,' meaning that it is always posited as a 'form of life.'"⁴⁴ Through this aestheticization (or as the aesthetic regime of art) American avant-garde collaborators can be seen as creating "art [that] is taken to be not only an expression of life but a form of self-education" during the 1960s.⁴⁵ My dissertation traces the forms of collective consciousness that participated in creating "a new sensorium" by promulgating the aesthetic regime of art.

⁴¹ *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 116.

⁴² Ibid, 116-117.

⁴³ Ibid, 117.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 118.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 119.

Performance theory and its evaluation of postmodernism as a time of experience, theatricality and intermediation; Kramer's examinations into postmodernism in music; and, Ranciere's notion of "the politics of aesthetics" all provide the foundation for the methodology of my dissertation project. In this project I examine collaborative, multimedia events by the American avant-garde in the 1960s via multiple poststructuralist and philosophical lenses. The methodological approach to each chapter is unique, depending on the media and collaborative aesthetic of the event.

1.5 PERFORMANCES AND METHODOLOGIES

1.5.1 Questioning Cagean Control

There is one composer immediately associated to musical experimentation during the 1960s in the United States. Of the names introduced in discussions of the American avant-garde, his name appears time and time again—no matter his relation to happenings, music, visual art, theater, Kostelanetz's Theatre of Mixed Means, Sayre's "object of performance," and even Kramer's quest for postmodernism. This artist who is no stranger to the histories of art, music, literature and theater is, John Cage.

John Cage's persistence in discussions of American avant-garde performance in the 1960s results from his relation to the production of many large-scale, multimedia collaborations. In events attributed to Cage, such as *Musicircus*, *Variations V, VI and VII*, *Newport Mix*, and *HPSCHD*, music, dance, painting, graphic design, film, poetry, electronic and computer

technology, and/or light, coalesce in one environment, and yet their individual properties are distinguished equally. Despite the collaborative effort used to create these performances, Cage's role as the composer of these events as *works* confines current scholarship to discussions of Cage's compositional aesthetic and philosophy. In doing so, multimedia events are simplified as products of a single consciousness. This trend can be seen as exemplified in the scholarly evaluation and examination of one of the most intricate and technologically motivated multimedia collaborations of the avant-garde in the 1960s: *Variations V*.

1.5.2 *Variations V*

On July 23, 1965, *Variations V* premiered at Lincoln Center for the New York Philharmonic's French-American Festival. The premiere performance and subsequent performances during the middle of the 1960s featured a unique combination of visual and aural forces, in which differing modes of media created an event that dizzied the audience in a supposed display of happenstance. On the contrary, however, *Variations V* depended on what I call, a "complex interface for the production of simultaneity," in which multiple voices of authority coalesced.⁴⁶ This "collage of authority" included both indeterminate and predetermined action on the part of the collaborators of the event, which included: John Cage, along with Merce Cunningham, Wilhelm (Billy) Klüver, Stan VanDerBeek, Nam June Paik, Frederic Lieberman, James Tenney, Malcolm Goldstein, and (in performances after the premiere), Gordon Mumma. Although the event is most often attributed to Cage, I question his role as the sole authoritative voice of the collaboration in the second chapter of my dissertation.

⁴⁶ Reference to my own prose in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2, “*Variations V*: ‘Escaping Stagnation’ Through Movement of Signification,” is divided into two parts. I begin by exploring the multimedia event’s sounds, images and gestures and historically contextualize them as signs associated with environmental and technological topics in the news during the 1960s. The purpose of this reading, however, is to demonstrate the futility of such an abstraction of signs because of its negligence of the collaged relations between the indeterminate and the determined elements of the multimedia collaboration; and in particular, for the way these elements play out through the choreography of Merce Cunningham. By creating potential intersections between media in space and time, indeterminacy in performance functions as a method in which the experimental avant-garde questioned the possible ways in which Americans could question reigning modes of social discourse during the ‘60s.

To support my argument, I call on the philosopher and cultural theorist Jacques Derrida, whose theory of *différance* serves as the foundation of my methodology for the chapter.⁴⁷ Through this Derridean lens I demonstrate how meaning in *Variations V* operates not through an abstraction of signification but through a *movement* of signification, or what Derrida calls *différance*. The second half of this chapter thus refuses any *one* reading of signs as it explores the role of Cunningham’s choreography for *Variations V* in evoking a Derridean play of relations. The constantly fluctuating existence/nonexistence of *différance* opens a new vista for indeterminacy as something other than “chance”: the language of Derrida infuses it with the potential of choice and change. Although the suspension of *what could occur* in a multimedia events such as *Variations V* inhabits a spatial and temporal realm ignored in order to merely chronicle them, in my second chapter I argue that the potentiality of indeterminacy, as revealed

⁴⁷ Derrida discusses *différance* in: Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

through a Derridean lens, is equally and even more important than historical accounts of performance.

1.5.3 Cage and his New York School

Already in the early 1950s, a number of composers in the Cage circle—Earle Brown (b. 1926), Morton Feldman (1926-1987), and Christian Wolff (b. 1934), comprising (by analogy with the painting of the period) a New York school of ‘action music’—began to open up spaces within which multiple possibilities could be realized at the moment of execution.⁴⁸

Instead, like nineteenth-century Paris, New York was sufficiently rich and sophisticated to support—even if with crumbs from the table of the artistic establishment—a provocative bohemian fringe, loosely but amiably focused on John Cage.⁴⁹

Out of the experiments of Cage and the New York School, which resulted in a new perspective regarding the relation of the composer, performer, and spectator to each other and to the creation of the musical happening, came several groups concerned with the concept of an all-inclusive art.⁵⁰

The New York School was a group of composers who, through their affiliation with the abstract expressionist painters also living in New York during the 1950s, gained a name that continues to be used today. As the quotations above demonstrate, however, this affiliation with the painters is most often coupled with the leadership of one man: John Cage. This leadership has been described as influential, organizational, and above all, seminal to the innovations and musical paths of Morton Feldman, Earle Brown and Christian Wolff (not to mention the artistic and performative paths of Merce Cunningham and David Tudor). In the fourth edition of Eric

⁴⁸ Eric Salzman, *Twentieth-Century Music: An Introduction*. 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), 165.

⁴⁹ Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople, *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 344.

⁵⁰ Elliott Antokoletz, *Twentieth-Century Music* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992), 482.

Salzman's *Twentieth-Century Music*, their reliance on Cage even takes on a Biblical character: "...the conceptual art of Cage *and his followers* is specifically devoted to the art work as an idea about art or about life, or even more radically, the idea *as art*."⁵¹ In most literature about twentieth-century music, Feldman, Brown and Wolff are introduced via Cage, and even more tendentiously, their music is discussed in terms of Cagean philosophy and aesthetics. For instance, in *Twentieth-Century Music*, Elliott Antokoletz employs a quote from Cage's *Silence* to summarize the interests of the New York "School":

Several composers who became associated with Cage in New York in the early 1950s, including Christian Wolff, Morton Feldman, Earle Brown, and David Tudor, were also interested in the dissociation of sound from personal expression and artistic taste: 'sound comes into its own...indifferent in motive, originating in no psychology nor in dramatic intentions, nor in literary or pictorial purposes...but...nothing, in the end, is denied.'⁵²

In this passage Cage's own words *speaks for* the diversity of compositional language between Feldman, Brown and Wolff. Contrary to the summarization of these three composers under Cagean rule, the influence between Feldman, Cage, Brown and Wolff was symbiotic: all of these composers, in addition to the visual artists with whom they were friends, affected *each other*. Why, then, is Cage almost always used as the composer who is at the head of the New York School? How can their very diverse compositional styles be evaluated through the compositional aesthetic of Cage? Similarity of interests does not indicate the supremacy of one consciousness.

In my dissertation I question the reign of Cage's philosophy in approaches to Feldman, Brown, and Wolff as the "New York School" by examining Feldman's and Brown's music, in multimedia settings. In my philosophical and cultural theoretical approach to performance, I do

⁵¹ Salzman, 165.

⁵² Antokoletz, 479.

not limit the examination of multimedia collaborations to composer-dominated discourse and illuminate the germination of a collective consciousness of the “Cagean” avant-garde community in terms of American culture and its multi-mediation.

1.5.4 *Calder Piece*

On February 27, 1967, Diego Masson and the First Percussion Quartet of Paris premiered *Calder Piece* at the Theatre de l’Atelier in Paris. A multimedia collaboration between Earle Brown, the visual artist, Alexander Calder, and four percussionists, *Calder Piece* demonstrates, as the composer claimed, “a very intricate ‘feedback’ condition between the mobile, the score, and the performers.”⁵³ In the second section of my dissertation, Chapters 3 and 4, I investigate just how intricate this “feedback condition” is.

In Chapter 3, “An Order We Are Not Looking For: Collaging *Calder Piece*,” I begin by examining the importance of artistic influences on Brown and then delve into the pages of his score to reveal *Calder Piece*’s composition through textual collage. Like cubist and surrealist visual artists in the first half of the twentieth century, Brown collaged through a cut and paste method. By using his own pre-compositional or compositional material, the composer quoted himself within these collaged compositions. As a result, multiple compositions relate to one another by sharing musical material. In the case of *Calder Piece*, the musical events are related to those in his *String Quartet* (1965); a result of conceiving and composing both while in Europe in the mid-1960s. Despite alterations and differences in regards to the order of events,

⁵³ Earle Brown, “Transformations and Developments of a Radical Aesthetic,” *Current Musicology* 67/68 (Fall 1999): 56.

instrumental timbre, pitch, dynamics, tempi, etc., because both are collaged with the same pre-compositional material, I argue that the relationship between the two pieces creates a new feedback condition; another layer that will, in effect, influence the “feedback condition” described by Brown between the main characters of the collaboration.

While the discussion in Chapter 3 focuses on the feedback of relations within Brown’s score, Chapter 4 uncovers another layer of the “feedback condition” by considering *Calder Piece* during the moment of performance. Although there is no choreographer, the movements of the four percussionists while performing *Calder Piece* have been likened to that of a ballet.⁵⁴ Unlike the meticulously determined gestures of Merce Cunningham, however, the movements of the percussionists cannot be predetermined as a result of Brown’s inclusion of Calder’s mobile as the “conductor.” Although Brown’s directions in the score dictate when the percussionists move to and from the mobile, the mobile’s movements influence the resulting bodily gestures of the percussionists. Furthermore, *Calder Piece* also includes moments in which the percussionists are instructed to “read” the mobile in conjunction with certain pages of the score. I examine the role of the percussionists in reading these pages and the mobile in Chapter 4. Similar to Brown’s textual collage of the score, the four percussionists create a “perceptual collage” dependent on the determined score, the unpredictable movements of the mobile, and interaction between one another. Because this perceptual collage is formed by the percussionist’s mind, yet another level of feedback occurs while the percussionist performs—an intricate relation between image, memory, and performer’s perception.

⁵⁴ Pierre Descargues, *Tribune de Lausanne*, March 5, 1967.

The purpose of Chapters 3 and 4 in the second part of my dissertation is to reveal how Brown's "intricate 'feedback' condition between the mobile, the score, and the performers" operates on multiple layers.⁵⁵ On its most apparent level, the feedback condition exists as Brown described it: *between* the characters of *Calder Piece*, during the moment of performance; however, as my investigation shows, it also appears within the score as a textual collage, within the minds of the performers as perceptual collage, and also between the multiple inspirations from visual artists, literary figures, and philosophers, that influenced Brown in his conception of the collaboration (a sort of, "influential collage").

Chapters 3 and 4 approach these levels of collage and feedback through the philosophical lens of Henri Bergson: a figure greatly admired by Brown. The textual, perceptual, and influential collage of Brown's compositional rhetoric allows for a play of determined and indeterminate relations which parallels Bergson's discussion of order and disorder in *Time and Free Will*, *Creative Evolution*, and *The Creative Mind*, and the function of the "two forms of memory," "memory-image," perception, recollection, and the body in *Matter and Memory*. Whereas the events of *Calder Piece* may appear disordered as a result of the uncontrollable movements of Calder's mobile, Bergson's rhetoric underscores that such "disorder" is "merely an order we are not looking for." Instead, by fusing form with mobility, *Calder Piece* establishes order in seemingly disordered events. The textual collage of Brown's score, in addition to the perceptual collage created by the mobile and percussionists, exhibit a reconsideration of open form that challenges pre-conceived notions of order.

⁵⁵ Earle Brown, "Transformations," 56.

1.5.5 *Summerspace*

On August 17, 1958, the ballet, *Summerspace*, premiered in Palmer Auditorium for the Eleventh American Dance Festival. The aesthetics of three figures converged for the multimedia event: those of the choreographer Merce Cunningham, the composer Morton Feldman, and the visual artist Robert Rauschenberg. Although Cunningham initiated the collaboration, the choreography, the music, and the décor for *Summerspace* were created independently even if at the same time. Once commissioned, Feldman created the piece titled *Ixion* separately from Cunningham's choreography: in other words, the music was not composed *for* the choreography and the choreography was not created under the influence of the music. In *Summerspace*, there is an "underlying principle that music and dance [and painting] could be separate entities independent and interdependent, sharing a common time."⁵⁶

The purpose of my final chapter is to investigate *Summerspace* as an exceptional multimedia collaboration on the threshold of the 1960s in which modes of media are separately created and then combined. I argue that a performance of *Summerspace* showcases an innovative approach to expression in which the egalitarian coexistence of the choreography, music and stage design, as well as in their independence, work to redefine the notion of surface as a new "depth." The clash of aural, visual and kinesthetic surfaces in *Summerspace*, provided a meaning of its own, denying the possibility of the imposition of meaning from outside of the media that constituted the ballet. Cunningham's strong affinity for the separation of music and dance resulted from his strong anxiety towards the imposition of meaning (but not the possibility of

⁵⁶ Merce Cunningham, "A Collaborative Process between Music and Dance," in *Merce Cunningham: Dancing in Space and Time*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (Chicago, IL: A Capella Books, 1992), 138. Original publication: Merce Cunningham, "A Collaborative Process between Music and Dance," *Tri-Quarterly* 54 (Spring 1982): 173-186.

meaning itself). For him, the meaning *was* and *is* dance, the message lodged in the medium itself.⁵⁷ By maintaining the individuality of music, dance, and the set and costume design, Cunningham, Feldman, and Rauschenberg have, as Cage stated in his “Lecture on Nothing,” “have nothing to say,” because no meaning seems to lie *behind* their contributions. And yet they are “saying it” through their respective modes of media—separately and when unified.⁵⁸ I position *Summerspace* purposefully between modernist and postmodernist thought by highlighting its unique mode of collaging music, dance and decor in performance—a collage of surfaces and indeterminacies. This collage does not have to add to a “textual unity”; its elements may be perceived separately by the viewer, even when “together” during the moment of performance. The exploration of surface in relation to the potential intersections in space and time, the intersections that did occur in space and time, and the continued intersections that *could* occur in space and in time again for *Summerspace*, illuminates the power of avant-garde multimedia performance in redefining spatiality in forming an entirely new type of social action.

My approach to the chapter is collaged; a discourse between current dance and literary theorists; art historians and critics, and the individual aesthetics of Feldman, Cunningham and Rauschenberg as stated by the artists themselves.

⁵⁷ This is a brief nod to Marshall McLuhan’s “the medium is the message.”

⁵⁸ John Cage, *Silence* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 109.

1.6 RESEARCH

My critical study of avant-garde performance depends on two main avenues of research. The first is archival research in institutions located in the United States which include the: Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, NY; New York Library for the Performing Arts, New York, NY; Archives of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, New York, NY; and, the Music Archives, University of Buffalo, State University of New York, Buffalo, NY. In addition to archival research, my current project is also informed by ethnographic work. I conducted interviews with performers and other participants in the events of my case studies, including: performers at CalArts; the percussionist most closely related to the “New York School,” Jan Williams; and, the president of the EBMF trust, executive producer of *Art 21*, and wife to Earle Brown, Susan Sollins. This ethnographic research provides and examines first-hand accounts of the relationships between the composer and the performer, the performer and the audience, and the audience and the composer.⁵⁹

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE

During the 1960s, a multi-mediated culture became the new platform for action and change that would fashion the historical record of American society perpetuated today. As appeals to visual *and* aural senses, collaborative performances are dynamic, collaged forces that shared a multi-

⁵⁹ Although I conducted four interviews in total, only quotes from Robert Fernandez, a percussionist at CalArts who performed in the American premiere of *Calder Piece* in 1980, appear in this dissertation.

mediated stage of the 1960s: my dissertation project reveals the need to understand collaborative consciousness on the part of the American avant-garde community at the time. The cultural impact of these performances is made stronger when the role of the meeting of indeterminacies is understood: while events unfolded to create performances of *Variations V*, *Calder Piece*, and *Summerspace* during the 1960s, these “pieces” are always still to come. The potentiality at the heart of these performances creates pliability to regenerate and become active forces once again, relevant to future social and cultural climates. The cultural-theoretical methodology and interdisciplinary approach of my project is the type of critical study needed to illuminate the potentiality of performance while also positioning avant-garde events historically in the society and artistic communities of the United States during the 1960s.

2.0 *VARIATIONS V*: “ESCAPING STAGNATION” THROUGH MOVEMENT OF SIGNIFICATION

A man sits in front of an electronic mixer: his attention remains fixed on a radio buried under a tangled mess of wires. He leans in as his left hand takes control of the radio’s dials. The labyrinth of the mixer never ends: wires sprawl from table to floor. On stage six antennae stand. Three screens hang on the back wall. A male dancer enters from stage left while carrying a plant. A high-pitched squeal and the faint sound of a dripping kitchen drain accompany his walk. With his destination reached, he stops, places the potted plant on the ground and begins to attach contact microphones to the pot and the leaves of the plant. The scene grows increasingly more sporadic in sight and sound: squealing and feedback, images of planes in the sky, the continuous dripping of water on a drain, images of cityscapes, sounds of crickets, mountains, birds cawing, planting, cartoons, coffee pouring, low growls, iconography, drilling, yoga, traditional instrumental sounds, movie stars, an assembly line leaping, a photograph of an old man, crawling, silence, movement.

This menagerie of image, choreography and sound offers a partial glimpse of the only aural and visual documentation of *Variations V*, a collaborative event by the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and composer, John Cage, performed multiple times in the United States and Europe during the middle of the 1960s: a film produced by Norddeutscher Rundfunk in 1966

while on the European leg of its tour. As part of the New York Philharmonic's French-American Festival, *Variations V* premiered on July 23, 1965 at Lincoln Center, following Edgard Varèse's *Hyperprism* (1922-23), Pierre Boulez's *Improvisation sur Mallarme II* (1957), and Elliot Carter's Second String Quartet (1959). Unlike the pieces of the first half of the Philharmonic's program, *Variations V* contrasted greatly in composition and media. Instead of orchestral instrumentalists performing live on their trumpets, cellos and violins, recorded and radio sounds filled the traditional concert hall through six speakers; the choreographed movements of seven dancers occupied the stage; and filmed images projected on a screen behind them. The performance was so overwhelming in its multimedia display that it seemed as if there was no connection between the various modes of artistic expression.

Despite its sporadic façade, however, performances of *Variations V* in the 1960s depended on a complex interface for the production of simultaneity between visual and aural media as woven by a collage of artistic authority. This interface may initially be traced to Cage and Cunningham, and their shared desire to create a performance in which movement on stage set sound into motion. However, multiple collaborators contributed their electronic designs to make performances of *Variations V* possible. To begin, a team of sound engineers created technology to mediate between motion and sound. The first piece of equipment was a fifty-channel mixer built by Max Mathews—a pioneer innovator in the field of computer and electronic music—one year prior to the French-American Festival in 1964 for Cage's New York Philharmonic premiere of *Atlas Eclipticalis*. Cage then called on a Swedish research scientist at Bell Labs, Wilhelm (Billy) Klüver, to construct a series of photocells. Whenever a dancer passed in front of a light source on stage and interfered with a cell's reception of that light, the interruption indicated a change in sound. To add to this method of electronic sound activation

were twelve high capacitance antennae constructed by yet another innovator of electronic music, Robert Moog; each one taken into consideration by Cunningham when he devised his choreographic design.

Sounds emanated primarily from two types of sources: tape recorders and radios. All of the tapes were created by Cage before the premiere and have been described as consisting primarily of “ambient sounds.”⁶⁰ Musician and composer, Frederic Lieberman gathered radios from electronic stores on Canal Street and, he, with James Tenney and Malcolm Goldstein—also associates of Cage at the time—acted as the team in charge of operating these sound devices. Cunningham, however, also attached contact microp

hones to props with which his dancers interacted during the performance. The recorded, radio and microphone sounds were fed into Mathews’s mixer, which controlled the amplitude and duration of sound. Cage and virtuoso pianist and composer, David Tudor, sat at its dials.

To complete the audio-visual collaboration were films and still shots supplied by American filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek, some of which were distorted by the video artist, Nam June Paik. This included clips from a film of a Cunningham Dance Company rehearsal, as well as imagery from mid-twentieth century television and film produced in the United States.

It is no doubt that the premiere of *Variations V* brought an entirely new type of performance to the American concert hall in 1965: one that featured technology and the interaction between differing modes of artistic media. Its innovations, however, have posed serious problems for musicologists who depend on prescriptive notation and the authority of the composer to form histories of music. There was no musical score that the collaborators followed

⁶⁰ Leta E. Miller, “Cage, Cunningham, and Collaborators: The Odyssey of *Variations V*,” *Musical Quarterly* 85, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 554.

while performing *Variations V*—the score that exists today was created by John Cage in October 1965, three months after the premiere performance. Subtitled “Thirty-Seven Remarks Re an Audio-Visual Performance,” the score lists just that—thirty-seven brief statements which specify certain resources, collaborators, methods of sound generation, and general attitudes in regards to its performance, such as “escape stagnation.”⁶¹ Featuring no traditional notation, this indeterminate score has been interpreted as Cage’s own reflection on the collaboration, rather than a prescriptive series of directions for future performance.⁶² Problems with this interpretation have been confronted by musician and writer, David P. Miller. As Miller aptly points out in an article on the performance practice of Cage’s *Variations* series, “indeterminacy is not synonymous with an absence of boundaries,” and “is responsive to changing technological, art-historical, or sociological conditions.”⁶³ However, by using the score as a figure of agency—one that had not even existed for the premiere and for many of its performances in the United States before the European tour—Miller also places all authority in the hands of John Cage. As a result, aural forces take precedence over the visual, despite the proclaimed equivalency of both.

A musicologist who has stepped outside of the musical score and has conducted the most thorough historical investigation of *Variations V* is Leta E. Miller. Her study reconstructs how the premiere of *Variations V* came to be and the challenges each collaborator faced in “a project in which technical equipment was so central to the concept of the work...”⁶⁴ Through a number

⁶¹ John Cage, *Variations V (Thirty-Seven Remarks RE an Audio-Visual Performance)* (New York: Henmar Press, 1965), 4.

⁶² For instance, this claim has been made by William Fetterman in *John Cage’s Theatre Pieces: Notations and Performances* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996), 130.

⁶³ David P. Miller, “Indeterminacy and Performance Practice in Cage’s *Variations*,” *American Music* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 64.

⁶⁴ Quote by lighting designer for *Variations V*, Beverly Emmons in interview with Leta Miller. In Leta E. Miller, “Cage, Cunningham, and Collaborators: The Odyssey of *Variations V*,” *Musical Quarterly* 85, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 555.

of personal interviews with many of the original collaborators—those in the team of sound engineers and those in the team who operated the sound devices—Miller continuously underlines the important role technology played as a figure of authority in the premiere. Unfortunately, this agency of technological mediation is never explicitly articulated because Miller avoids hermeneutic discussion. As a result, her article, as valuable as it is for tracing the conception, development, and reception of *Variations V* during the 1960s, does not discuss it in terms of *meaning*.

The purpose of this chapter is to move the discussion of *Variations V* away from pure descriptive accounts—whether historical or those concerned with performance practice—and towards an understanding of its dynamic cultural meaning, the importance of which was ascribed by the *New York Times* critic, Allen Hughes, only one day after the premiere performance: “In a sense *Variations V* was a monumental symphony of the visual and aural banalities of our age and as such was highly successful.”⁶⁵ The collaboration premiered and toured the United States during the middle of the 1960s, a decade which has never been characterized historically in terms of stasis. On the contrary, it is often historicized in terms of movement: in revolution, as going overseas to war, as moving “upwards,” and embodied in social unrest.⁶⁶ Following Hughes’s

⁶⁵ Allen Hughes, “Dance: Created on Stage; Cunningham Rides Bike for ‘Variations V’,” *New York Times*, July 24, 1965.

⁶⁶ See John Robert Greene, “We’ll Have the Opportunity to Move Upward: The Great Society of Lyndon B. Johnson,” in *America in the Sixties*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010) for his discussion of movement “upward” by LBJ in his speech at the University of Michigan on May 22, 1964 in which Johnson stated memorably: “In your time we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society” (Greene 2010, 68); M.J. Heale, *The Sixties in America: History, Politics and Protest* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001), Edward P. Morgan, *The 60’s Experience: Hard Lessons about Modern America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and The Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) for discussions of the social unrest, activism and political movements of the 1960s (including their relation to war); Beth Bailey, “Sexual Revolution,” David Farber, “The Silent Majority and Talk about Revolution,” and “The New American Revolution: The Movement and Business,” in *The Sixties From Memory to History*, ed. David Farber (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1994) for essays on

claim, it is tempting to read the sounds, images, and gestures of *Variations V* as referring to culturally significant topics of the time and thereby relate the collaboration to the everyday, American experience.

However, is the meaning revealed from such a semiotic reading the same meaning that transpires in the time and space of performance? In the first half of this chapter I explore the multimedia event's sounds, images and gestures and historically contextualize them as signs associated with environmental, ecological, and technological topics in the news that would have been experienced by Americans everyday during the 1960s.⁶⁷ This reading, however, serves to demonstrate the futility behind such an abstraction of signification, as it neglects to account not only for indeterminacy but also for the relations between the indeterminate and the determined elements of the multi-media collaboration, and in particular for the ways these elements play out through the detailed choreography of Merce Cunningham.

I argue that *Variations V*, as Cage's last remark in his own "report" on the piece urges, "escapes stagnation." During performances of the collaboration in the 1960s its system of signification would have been projected through indeterminate interaction between artistic media; and it is through this indeterminacy that I believe the collaborators succeeded as innovative activists who bridged aesthetics and politics. By creating potential intersections between media in space and time indeterminacy in performance functioned as a method in which

movement in terms of revolution; and, Terry H. Anderson, *The Sixties*, 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2004) for a general introduction to the 1960s in terms of movement.

⁶⁷ The filmed version is of a performance in Hamburg while the Merce Cunningham Dance Company was on the European leg of its tour with John Cage, David Tudor and Gordon Mumma in 1966. Before the performance begins, there is a five minute introduction by the producer Hansjörg Pauli in German. The film was co-produced by Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Hamburg and Sveriges Radio Television (1966) and has not been released commercially by the Merce Cunningham Dance Company on DVD (such as the most recent release in February 2011 of *Merce Cunningham Dance Company/Robert Rauschenberg* featuring *Suite for Five*, *Summerspace* and *Interscape*). It is available through the Dance in Video series by Alexander Street Press as a streaming video and also through the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, MGZHB 20-85, 16mm film reel.

the experimental avant-garde questioned modes of social activism. The nexus between what a performance could be and how it was inscribed in time constitutes what I call the “culture of indeterminacy.” Images, sounds, and gestures of nature, urbanity, technology, suburbia, etc., were shown and heard in a different way: overlapped, interrupting, and yet equal in relevance, no matter the media—a visual and aural critique of hierarchical projection. Through this culture of indeterminacy, I believe Cage and his collaborators offered a different approach to the same set of social and political concerns as expressed in mass media.

To further this understanding of the culture of indeterminacy, I call on the philosopher and cultural theorist Jacques Derrida whose semantic perspective offers a compelling framework to account for both signification and performance. Through this Derridean lens I demonstrate how meaning in *Variations V* operates not through signification alone but through the *movement* of signification, or what Derrida calls *différance*: “It is because of *différance* that the movement of signification is possible only if each so-called ‘present’ element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself...”⁶⁸ In the case of *Variations V*, each “present element”—whether sound, gesture, image or a relation between them—depends on “something other than itself” as a result of indeterminacy. The second half of this chapter refuses any *one* reading of signs as it explores the role of Merce Cunningham’s choreography for *Variations V* in thematizing a Derridean play of relations.

⁶⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 13.

2.1 STAGNATION OF SIGNIFICATION

2.1.1 Environmental and Ecological Topics

Two weeks before the premiere of *Variations V* Adlai Stevenson addressed the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations on issues concerning the environment: “We travel together, passengers on a little space ship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil; all committed for our safety to its security and peace; preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and, I will say, the love we give our fragile craft.”⁶⁹ Although the philosophical and organizational beginnings of environmentalism may be traced to the early nineteenth century, and acts of conservation and preservation occurred throughout the first half of the twentieth, as Riley E. Dunlap and Angela G. Mertig state in *American Environmentalism: The U.S. Environmental Movement, 1970-1990*, “these old and new issues began to coalesce in the 1960s and gradually evolved into environmental concerns.”⁷⁰ Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962), a series of articles in the *New Yorker* analyzing the “wide-ranging impacts of pesticides on the natural environment and human beings,” served as the impetus for broadening awareness for the environment and also ecology at the opening of the decade.⁷¹ By 1965, public concern, expressed on local and regional levels, was slowly answered by government legislation.⁷² These

⁶⁹ Roderick Frazier Nash, *American Environmentalism: Readings in Conservation History*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing, 1990), 187.

⁷⁰ Riley E. Dunlap and Angela G. Mertig, *American Environmentalism: The U.S. Environmental Movement, 1970-1990* (Philadelphia: Taylor & Francis, 1992), 2.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² It was not until 1970, that environmentalism became a *national* movement, with the “transformation formalized by the national celebration of Earth Day,” (Dunlap 1992: 2) and a support base of 20 million participants.

local stories serve as a possible route of signification that could have been related to the sounds, images and gestures of *Variations V* depending on the indeterminate relations that unfolded.

Drip, drip, drip, drip, drip, drip, drop. The most pervasive sound in the filmed performance of *Variations V* is that of dripping water on a drain. It is one of the first sounds introduced, and often interrupts and overcomes other sounds as more and more enter the aural arena. Water was also a dominant topic in the news in 1965. In 1948, Congress enacted the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA) in recognition of the threat of polluted water and in the aims of expanding Federal regulation of the nation's water resources. The Water Quality act expanded this regulation when signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on October 2, 1965. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the act "provided for the setting of water quality standards which are State and Federally enforceable; it became the basis for interstate water quality standards."⁷³ The importance of these interstate regulations was called "the most controversial provisions of the new law," by the *Wall Street Journal* on the day the act was signed. In addition, however, the WQA "double[d] the dollar limit on individual city projects to \$1.2 million from \$600,000, and double[d] that for multi-city projects to \$4.8 million from \$2.4 million," in the grant program for sewage-treatment plants.⁷⁴

Although the WQA was passed after the premiere performance of *Variations V*, the act had been in the news since the spring of 1965. *The Washington Post*, briefly mentioned Senator Edmund Muskie's (D-ME) warning to take action and ensure an adequate supply of clean water for a "booming population" at a luncheon in Virginia on April 29, 1965. Muski introduced the

⁷³ "Water," United States Environmental Protection Agency, accessed September 27, 2010, <http://www.epa.gov/history/topics/fwpca/05.htm>. Online link not active as of April 16, 2012. Visit <http://water.epa.gov/>.

⁷⁴ Staff Reporter, "Federal Role in Fighting Water Pollution is Strengthened by Bill Signed by Johnson," *Wall Street Journal*, October 4, 1965.

WQA to the Senate earlier in 1965 and endorsed it in a speech for the luncheon stating that the WQA of 1965: “will help bring our national program of pollution abatement and control up to date and to put ourselves in a position to deal with the problems of the future.”⁷⁵

The value of water entered the minds of many Americans by the summer of 1965 as the northeast continued to experience a drought that had been lowering the percentage of water in reservoirs for a few years. As the snow melted in early March, the low water table raised fears of a severe summer water shortage: fears that grew by April when Mayor Robert Wagner of New York City called for the “stiffest” restrictions “in years” to aid conservation efforts. On April 11, 1965, the *New York Times* reported: “They will leave the streets dirty, may cause lawns to turn brown, should silence thousands of dripping faucets, change the tooth-brushing habits of the young—and save a minimum of 50 million gallons a day.”⁷⁶ The mayor hoped these efforts would help New York City deal with a storage system that was predicted to be at only 65 percent capacity by the end of spring runoff on June first. Unfortunately, this prediction turned out to be more hopeful than the actual capacity that resulted, as indicated in a headline in the *Times* on June third: “City’s Water Supplies Fall to 55 Percent of Capacity.”⁷⁷ By the end of June, the city began to weigh the option of using water from the Hudson River by rebuilding a pumping station that had once been located at Chelsea. As the water situation worsened, other cities, most notably Philadelphia, felt the effects of the water shortage due to New York City’s contribution to the Delaware Basin. By August, the Federal government finally stepped in and took action. In response to crises such as that in the northeast, the Water Quality Act passed in October 1965.

⁷⁵ “Water May Be Problem,” *The Washington Post Times Herald*, April 29, 1965.

⁷⁶ “Curbs on Water Imposed in City; Stiffest in Years,” *New York Times*, April 11, 1965.

⁷⁷ Philip Benjamin, “Reservoir Levels Continue to Drop: City’s Water Supplies Fall to 55 Per Cent of Capacity,” *New York Times*, June 3, 1965.

Bearing in mind the location of Cage and his collaborators in New York City in 1965, it appears as if the sound of water in *Variations V* would have carried with it a specific association to the preservation, conservation, and shortage of the time. Personified through tape recorders, the dripping water seems to amplify the growing concern for the environment on the part of American citizens; its insistence conceivably cultivating uneasiness in the minds of New York concertgoers.

Many images in the film produced by Norddeutscher Rundfunk of *Variations V* also carry connotations of the natural or of nature, including: multiple photographs of outdoor landscapes, photographs of sheep, and iconographic drawings of animals. Although the Water Quality Act demonstrated federal concern in regards to the national water supply, the government also turned its attention to environmental issues of land and air. Not only did membership in the Sierra Club skyrocket from 1964 onward, but new groups also formed, such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in 1966. According to *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s*, “reformers saw the government apparatus and rational application of science and technology as a means by which to protect both the human and natural world.”⁷⁸ President Johnson and his administration answered the call for reform by these organizations in a speech delivered on May 22, 1964 at the University of Michigan. Describing the United States as a “Great Society,” President Johnson reinforced environmental awareness:

We have always prided ourselves on being not only America the strong and America the free, but America the beautiful. Today that beauty is in danger. The water we drink, the food we eat, the very air that we breathe, are threatened with pollution. Our parks are

⁷⁸David Farber and Beth Bailey, *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 275-276.

overcrowded, our seashores overburdened. Green fields and dense forests are disappearing.⁷⁹

The importance of preventing an “Ugly America,” was continuously “supported in legislation that would limit air, water and solid-waste pollution,” beginning with the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Wilderness Act of 1964, followed by: The WQA (already discussed above); the Clean Air Act (1965), which established a mandate on including pollution control devices on automobiles; and also the Air Quality Act of 1967, concerned with industrial air pollution. In the Wilderness Act, 9.1 million acres of land were labeled as “wilderness” and protected in national forests. The act also outlined a national conception of “wilderness”: “A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.”⁸⁰ Many of the panoramic views of outdoor landscapes in *Variations V* featured no human “visitors,” except for the photograph of the herd of animals in which some men are present. They appear to be suggestive of Johnson’s conception of a natural and untouched wilderness; and, when these images are contextualized into the time period in which they were shown in performance, they could be interpreted as signs of Johnson’s political agenda.

Of particular note in regards to these landscapes is the presence of mountains and their possible association to Storm King Mountain, a mountain of the Hudson Highlands that had been in the news since 1963. In January 1963, Consolidated Edison proposed a project to the Federal Power Commission that required an 800-foot long power house, reservoir and transmission lines

⁷⁹Lyndon Baines Johnson, “The Great Society,” American Rhetoric: Top 100 Speeches, accessed September 27, 2010, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/lbjthegreatsociety.htm>.

⁸⁰ “Wilderness Act of 1964,” Wilderness.net, accessed September 27, 2010, <http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=legisAct&error=404#2>.

to be built around the base and behind Storm King Mountain. By the end of the year a small group of local citizens, called the Scenic Hudson Preservation Conference, intervened in the Power Commission hearings. They believed the project threatened not only the Cornwall water supply and fisheries of the Hudson River but also the natural beauty that the scenic mountain landscape offered. Despite their efforts, however, in March of 1964 the Commission granted a license for Edison's project. Scenic Hudson and the surrounding towns continued to protest and, as reported in the *New York Times* on February 27, 1965, the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources also intervened: "In a letter to the Federal Power Commission the committee unanimously expressed its view that granting a license to the Consolidated Edison Company to build a hydroelectric plant on Storm King Mountain would be 'contrary to the best interests of the people of New York State.'"⁸¹

By July 1965, Scenic Hudson petitioned for the Edison proposal to be reviewed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in July 1965. The legal dispute continued until the end of 1980 when Consolidated Edison decided to end its plans on Storm King Mountains and a settlement was reached between the company and Scenic Hudson. Although this settlement took almost twenty years to accomplish, Storm King marks a landmark case for outlining the rights of United States citizens in their fight for environmental concerns and for its impact in building the country's first National Environment Policy Act. As Storm King Mountain reappeared in the headlines of the *New York Times*, it became familiar to Americans as they went about their daily routines, transforming into a symbol of environmental concern. The repetition of mountainous

⁸¹ "New Hope for the Hudson," *New York Times*, February 27, 1965.

landscapes in *Variations V* could have been linked with that of Storm King and the environmental controversy in which it was enveloped.

The imagery of Johnson's American wilderness may also be heard in *Variations V*. Throughout the filmed performance of *Variations V* different sounds evocative of the outdoors occur. These include cawing birds, crickets, growling, and even sheep "baa-ing." Gesture has ties to nature as well. When Merce first enters the stage in the filmed performance of the collaboration, he carries with him a leafy plant. Initially, he pulls the leaves off of the plant. After five minutes, however, he returns to the plant to put its leaves back on. Carolyn Brown also tends to the plant: instead of removing leaves, however, she brings the plant a new pot. After filling the new pot with crumpled newspaper, Brown releases the plant from its original pot by breaking it with a shovel. She frees the plant and then replants it into the new pot anchored by the newspaper. Now the plant is grounded by paper earth. The attention Cunningham and Brown devote to the plant could be read in a number of different ways; however the amount of time dedicated to it—about fifteen minutes in total if all of the moments with the plant are added together—points to the significance of moving bodies engaging with the environment, or what seems to be a product of it (perhaps it is just a plastic plant and thus a representation of this environment).

2.1.2 Technology

Performances of *Variations V* in the 1960s depended on a variety of electronic equipment—a mixer, radios, tape recorders, photoelectric cells, antennae, etc.—because the collaborators wished to create sound whose entrance in the performance depended on the movement of

dancers. Although the dancers incorporated contact microphones on props to amplify the sounds of their movements, these gestures did not symbolize the role of technology in everyday, American life. The choreography in the filmed performance of *Variations V* exhibits mundane movements such as crawling or lunging, instead of classical moves from ballet, but never evocations of the “technological.” Instead, images and sound offer a technological perspective of the United States in the 1960s.

Norddeutscher Rundfunk’s production of *Variations V* on film subjects the audience to images from both the film and television industries: scenes from *Born Yesterday*; an actress on loop, laughing and turning her head away from the camera; a moment from the cartoon *Otis and Ollie*; and brief excerpts from a comedic talk show. Part of the visual frenzy of *Variations V* depends on images seen every day at the movie theater and more often in American homes on television.⁸²

According to Terry Anderson in *The Sixties*, “By 1960...Americans had purchased 50 million TVs, and during the next years the network evening news expanded from 15 minutes to a half hour, provoking interest in national issues.”⁸³ As a result, about 87 percent of American homes had one or more sets.⁸⁴ While television shows in the early 1960s remained nostalgic for the rural, simple family life depicted in black and white during the 1950s, they were constantly interrupted by advertisers who made the programs financially possible. Thus, the television

⁸² In the filmed version of *Variations V*, some of these images are superimposed over the entire performance during the postproduction process. These images, however, are taken from the gamut of films selected by Stan VanDerBeek as well as from the distorted television images by Nam June Paik.

⁸³ Terry H. Anderson, *The Sixties*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 2004), 22.

⁸⁴ Percentage from Myron A. Marty, *Daily Life in the United States, 1960-1990: Decades of Discord* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 9. This was incredibly higher than the percentage of Americans who owned TV sets in 1950: only 3 percent.

exploded as the most popular outlet for controlling the consumer market. Myron Marty explores the “place and power of television,” in *Daily Life in the United States, 1960-1990*:

Television...gave advertisers almost uninterrupted access to Americans of all ages, races, and social classes in all parts of the country. Thus it became the most powerful force in creating a national culture of consumerism, that is, a culture that catered to consumers' tastes.⁸⁵

Although commercials interrupted the wholesome, family values depicted in television shows, advertisers paralleled these onscreen narratives by presenting “goods and services in idealized versions of family and community life.”⁸⁶ To make this life more convenient, commercials depicted desired goods not as wants, but as absolute necessities. The filmed performance of *Variations V*, too, features this “interruption” with brief excerpts from commercials displayed behind and on top of Cunningham’s dancers, the majority portraying food products including turkey, chicken, coffee, and pancakes topped with butter and syrup. Without product names the audience of the 1960s could not have identified whether or not the products were by Maxwell House or Folgers, or Pillsbury or IHOP; however their commercial signification would have been unmistakable.

The inclusion of commercial images exclusively about food points to the importance of television in controlling American nutrition at the time. The American diet had changed by the 1960s and was often described as the “great glob” by writers. Everything became fattier and saltier. Instead of real orange juice, synthetic fruit drinks overloaded with sugar grew in popularity. Sugar replaced whole grains in breakfast cereals. In Lucky Charms, a cereal introduced in 1964, 50.4% of it was made of sugar.⁸⁷ On average, Americans consumed 85.1

⁸⁵ Marty, 9.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Farber, 340.

pounds of beef (which increased to 113.7 pounds by 1970!) and 7.5 pounds of butter in 1960.⁸⁸ Despite the lack of nutrition in the American diet, there was certainly not a lack in calories: 3,140 were allowed per day.

In its incorporation of commercial imagery, *Variations V* not only seems to comment on the eating habits of Americans but, more importantly, on the role of television in its direct effect on multiple aspects of everyday life. It was television that came to signify the epitome of the everyday in the 1960s because:

It influenced the way individuals and families spent their days. It determined how they arranged their schedules, thought about current issues, spent their money, found subjects for conversation, and chose books to read. It influenced the use of rooms in their homes and the arrangement of furniture. It diverted attention from other people in the room, stifling conversation, and it led to the invention of precooked TV dinners and TV trays for serving them.⁸⁹

Another type of image evoking the technological that reappears throughout the filmed performance of *Variations V* is one of travel. Two images of airplanes appear and reappear: one of a T.W.A. plane and one from Pan American Airways (Pan Am). Although not coinciding with these images, the buzz of an airplane may also be heard at different and unexpected moments of the performance.

In early May of 1965 the financial situation for Pan Am did not look good: the *New York Times* reported that in its first period, the airline's loss widened to \$6,914,000 in comparison to \$1,156,000 in the same period of 1964.⁹⁰ By June of 1965, however, the *New York Times* reported record-setting numbers in relation to the number of passenger miles for Pan Am,

⁸⁸ One should compare this to the average in 1997: 63.8 and 4.2 respectively. Farber, 340.

⁸⁹ Marty, 9.

⁹⁰ Robert E. Bedingfield, "Pan Am Airways Deeper Into Red," *New York Times*, May 5, 1965.

American Airlines, and United Air. In this case, Pan Am had a 5.8 percent increase in passenger miles from May 1964. The future looked bright for air travel.

The news also covered stories exhibiting the American desire to travel by air. In fact, 1965 was celebrated as the year to “See the U.S.A.” by President Johnson in the “Discover America” program, a campaign to entice Americans to skip trips abroad in order to give sightseeing in the United States a chance and also to convince Europeans to give American soil a gander. The program did not significantly influence domestic travel, but it did impact foreign travel to the United States. According to the *New York Times*:

Travel Industry officials predict the heaviest spring-summer foreign travel in U.S. history and the figures bear them out. During April, when the Administration stated that tourists were responsible for \$1.6 billion of the unfavorable balance of payments in 1964, 175,223 new passports were issued, compared with 146,792 the previous April.⁹¹

For Pan American World Airlines, the increase in travel meant that bookings were up 15 percent for June and 30 percent for July. T.W.A., the other airline portrayed in *Variations V*, reported an increase of 42.5 percent in international travel. Both airlines invested in convincing tourists from overseas to visit the United States.⁹² Pan Am offered a “Thriftway to the U.S.A.” plan to foreign travelers which lowered the rate on chartered flights from 5.5 and 6.5 cents-a-mile to 3.5 cents-a-mile in the summer of 1965. The airline received \$6 million worth of responses by June 20th. To promote and advertise travel to the U.S., Pan Am doubled their 1965 overseas budget to more than \$10 million. T.W.A dedicated \$3.5 million to advertising in Europe alone.⁹³ The success of T.W.A.’s advertising strategies brought the airline more revenue as well as positive portrayal in a feature article in the *New York Times* on July 4, 1965 titled,

⁹¹ “Tourists,” Reports from the Nation, *New York Times*, May 16, 1965.

⁹² Percentages found in “Tourists,” May 16, 1965.

⁹³ The “Thriftway to the U.S.A.” plan was described in “News and Notes from the Field of Travel,” *New York Times*, June 20, 1965.

“Advertising: How T.W.A Got Off the Ground.” From January to April of the same year, revenues were up 18 percent compared to those of the same period in 1964. During the mid-1960s images and sounds of planes could have easily been related to the growing success of travel by plane both nationally and internationally.

Flying was not the only mode of transportation on the minds of Americans during the 1960s. In fact, it was the automobile that captured more hearts. In the filmed performance of *Variations V* images of traffic also point to this popularity. Whereas Americans owned 25 million cars in 1945, by 1965 they owned 75 million.⁹⁴ After the Interstate Highway Act was approved in 1956, construction on interstates began rapidly for completion by the 1960s; and, as Americans bought cars, the infrastructure of their cities rapidly changed. To connect urban roads to the interstate system “spaghetti like interchanges...resulted in the loss of more neighborhoods and the migration of more residents to suburbia.”⁹⁵ Although car travel instigated migration, urban sprawl cemented a relationship between Americans and their cars. As factories, shopping malls and other offices migrated from the cities to the suburbs, people became completely dependent on them to get to work, to go shopping, and to go to school. Everyday movement was thus associated with longer periods of travel. The incorporation of traffic imagery could have also signified the movement from the cities to the suburbs, which was happening at the time of the premiere performance of *Variations V*.

⁹⁴ Farber, 264.

⁹⁵ 59.

2.2 *DIFFÉRANCE* AND THE PLAY OF PRESENCE AND ABSENCE

Images of mountain landscapes, the sounds of airplanes in the sky, the act of planting or gardening, television commercials, and the sound of water—these aural and visual stimuli could have acted as signs related to topics of the environment and technology during the mid-1960s because they were not unique to the concert halls in which *Variations V* was performed. They were sights and sounds experienced everyday by American audience members. However, their meaning as environmental, ecological and/or technological signs would have been dependent on the individual audience member, itself contingent on his or her geographic location and exposure to these topics in the news, as well as on other parameters such as gender, race, age, etc.. Consequently, a reading of sound, image and gesture, such as the one I conducted in the first half of this chapter, relies on a conception of presence wherein signification is relative to a person's knowledge of what was happening in the mid-60s both culturally and historically. This understanding skims the ephemerality of the performances of *Variations V* in favor of hard facts. Although these images, sounds and gestures may have acted as socially encoded signs, were their cultural, social and political meanings necessarily the same as those to arise during the *act* of performance?

An analysis of cultural signification that persisted through signs in the multimedia display of the filmed version of *Variations V* may ground the performance in the 1960s; however the indeterminate nature of its collaboration—essential for expressing the changing topics and methods of political activism—cannot be grasped, unless the signification of these political, cultural and social allusions is considered as existing in multiple guises and is always and

already possible. What is always and already possible is not always “present” in the sense described above. Therefore, to speak of any sort of meaning, and in this case, of a political and social meaning in particular, is to consider a space of presence in which there is *potentiality*. This space of presence is created by the media events that did not occur in one performance, but could always still occur in another as a result of both indeterminate and determined elements in the multimedia collaboration. In the next performance how will the interaction between these events change, and how will these changes alter signification? The continuous play during performance needs to be considered in terms of understanding any cultural, political, and social meaning for *Variations V*; not in *one* reading, but in a multiplicity of them. Through play and potentiality, a stagnant surface of signs can be broken to reveal the movement of signification.

2.2.1 Away from the Text: Antonin Artaud and Presence

Fifteen years prior to the premiere of *Variations V*, John Cage wrote a letter to Pierre Boulez about his *Music of Changes* and included the following anecdote: “And I have been reading a great deal of [Antonin] Artaud. (This is because of you and through Tudor who read Artaud because of you.)...I will soon send you a copy of the first part of the piano piece [*Music of Changes*]. The essential underlying idea is that each thing is itself, that its relations with other things spring up naturally rather than being imposed by any abstraction on an ‘artist’s’ part. (see Artaud on an objective synthesis).”⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Pierre Boulez quoted in Eric Smigel, “Recital Hall of Cruelty: Antonin Artaud, David Tudor, and the 1950s Avant-Garde,” *Perspectives of New Music* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 177.

Eric Smigel recently explored the importance of the influence of Artaud's *Le Théâtre et son double* on the virtuoso pianist David Tudor and the composer John Cage in *Perspectives of New Music*.⁹⁷ Entitled, "Recital Hall of Cruelty: Antonin Artaud, David Tudor, and the 1950s Avant-Garde," Smigel's article, in its discussion on Cage, points to the impact of Artaud's ideas in composing *Music of Changes* and in creating the first so-called "happening"—the untitled event at Black Mountain College—in August of 1952. In his letter to Boulez about the former, Cage mentions his interest in Artaud's idea of an "objective synthesis." As Smigel explains, "Cage's reference to 'an objective synthesis' concerns Artaud's description of the 'magic and sorcery' of the *mise en scène*, 'the burning projection of all the objective consequences of a gesture, word, sound, music, and their combinations.'"⁹⁸ Cage thus admired Artaud's insistence on an unimpeded objectification of media elements in combination, and contemplated how sound existed in this configuration in particular. As Tudor explained in 1972:

The one thing John and I have in common is an interest in sound for its own sake. What I mean is that we're interested in leaving sound to itself, and we're not interested in manipulating a sound, in imposing a concept on sound. Caged used to preach that sounds should be themselves.⁹⁹

Thus, in *Music of Changes*, chance procedures were used to objectify sound elements so that relations were able to "spring up naturally." What Smigel does not explain, however, is the issue that Artaud opposes throughout the chapter in which this quote appears (titled "Oriental and Occidental Theater"). Artaud begins the sentence by proposing that "It is in the light of magic and sorcery that the *mise en scène* must be considered..." but he continues by underscoring his central concern: the "...*mise en scène* must be considered *not* as the reflection

⁹⁷ Eric Smigel, "Recital Hall of Cruelty: Antonin Artaud, David Tudor, and the 1950s Avant-Garde," *Perspectives of New Music* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 171-202.

⁹⁸ Smigel, 178.

⁹⁹ David Tudor, "From Piano to Electronics," *Music and Musicians* 20, no. 12 (August 1972): 26.

of a written text, the mere projection of physical doubles that is derived from the written work...”¹⁰⁰ It is in this concluding paragraph to the chapter that Artaud reinforces his distrust of the text in its narrative trends and repetitive utterances. Although Smigel’s comparison of Cage’s chance operations to the “objective consequences” of the magical *mise en scène* points to Artaud’s influence, *Music of Changes* is a written work and any performance thereafter will be a reflection of a written text; not a “burning projection” but one of “physical doubles.”

A stronger example of Artaud’s influence and the permeation of his ideas regarding the magic and sorcery of the *mise en scène* may be linked to the untitled event at Black Mountain College. The mystery behind the event of 1952 arises from a lack of primary source material, the questionable existence of a score and many recollections of the event which conflict in detail (by those in attendance and those performing it).¹⁰¹ In *John Cage’s Theatre Pieces: Notations and Performances*, William Fetterman attributes the “single most relatively complete performance description” to John Cage:

*At one end of the rectangular hall, the long end, was a movie, and at the other end were slides. I was on a ladder delivering a lecture which included silences, and there was another ladder which M.C. Richards and Charles Olson went up at different times...Robert Rauschenberg was playing an old-fashioned phonograph that had a horn..., and David Tudor was playing piano, and Merce Cunningham and other dancers were moving through the audience. Rauschenberg’s pictures [the White Paintings] were suspended above the audience...They were suspended at various angles, a canopy of paintings above the audience. I don’t recall anything else except the ritual with the coffee cup. (Kirby and Chechner 1965, 52-53).*¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1958), 73.

¹⁰¹ For the most complete documentation of the performance, see: William Fetterman, *John Cage’s Theatre Pieces: Notations and Performances* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996). In this chapter he explains that Cage claimed that there had been for a score for the untitled event, consisting of time brackets within which the collaborators could work, but that since the 60s, he claimed that he could not find it. Fetterman continues: “After Cage’s death, one section of the score was discovered among his personal papers. It is for the part of the projectionist, written in pencil on an 8-1/2” by 11” piece of paper, held the long way” (Fetterman 1996, 103).

¹⁰² Fetterman, 99.

As the least detailed description in Fetterman's chapter, Cage's account acts as the foundation which supports the other perspectives of the untitled event. For instance, Cage mentions that M.C. Richards and Charles Olson ascend the ladder; however, he never mentions what they do. Fetterman attempts to complete the story, but it is not consistent. In the case of M.C. Richards, she and Tudor remember that she read her own poetry; however, David Weinrib "recalls Richards reading selections from Edna St. Vincent Millay (Duberman 1972, 354)."¹⁰³

The fragmentary nature of the event's historical existence mirrors the event's existence in the past and speaks once again to what Cage so admired in Artaud's *Theatre and Its Double*: 'Each of these means,' writes Artaud, 'has its own intrinsic poetry, and a kind of ironic poetry as well, resulting from the way it combines with the other means of expression.'¹⁰⁴ In other words, each media element in the untitled event at Black Mountain College—music, painting, dance, poetry, film—served as a means to its own end, unimpeded by the actions of other surrounding media. By doing so, the intrinsic poetry (i.e., semantic layer) of each element persisted. A "kind of ironic poetry" results, however, when separateness (or the intrinsic poetry of each element) is performed simultaneously to create one performance. Another collaborator, Merce Cunningham, also spoke to this notion, and it grounds the foundation of the Cage-Cunningham collaborative aesthetic in general. In a December 1967 interview Martin Duberman asked him: "Did you actually rehearse for the evening [of the untitled event at Black Mountain College]?" Cunningham replied: "No. We just did our things, so to speak, separately...I improvised the whole thing..." Duberman pressed Cunningham on this notion of separateness further: "Can you

¹⁰³ Fetterman, 101.

¹⁰⁴ Smigel, 178.

tell me a little about the theory, if there is any such thing as a theory, as to what value there is for these separate activities to be going on simultaneously?” Cunningham continued:

I think the values—if you’re going to use that word—is in respect to the way life itself is all these separate things going on at the same time. And contemporary society is so extraordinary complex that way. Not only things going on right around you, but there are all the things that you hear instantly over the television, that are going on someplace else...that idea of separateness, of things happening even though they are separate they’re happening at the same time...¹⁰⁵

Cunningham extends his explanation of separateness from the stage to contemporary society. Through this metaphor, the combination of individual media elements can be likened to the multiplicity of life wherein irony erupts into unpredictability.

In an interview with Richard Kostelanetz Cage discussed the independence between the artistic media of the untitled event in a manner that paralleled Cunningham’s description of its “separateness”:

What were you trying to do? Well, M.C. [Richards] had translated *The Theatre and Its Double* of [Antonin] Artaud, and we got the idea from Artaud that theater could take place free of a text, that if a text were in it, that it needn’t determine the other actions, that sounds, that activities, and so forth, could all be free rather than tied together; so that rather than the dance expressing the music or the music expressing the dance, that the two could go together independently, neither one controlling the other. And this was extended on this occasion not only to music and dance, but to poetry and painting, and so forth, and to the audience.¹⁰⁶

In this quote Cage acknowledges the influence of Artaud and even attributes the main idea of separateness and independence between artistic media behind the untitled event to the “metaphysician of the theater.” More importantly, however, the quote demonstrates how Cage and his collaborators interpreted Artaud’s mission to free the theater from text, a principal, philosophical thread of *The Theater and Its Double* explicitly declared in his eighth chapter,

¹⁰⁵ Martin Duberman, *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community*, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1972), 356-357.

¹⁰⁶ Richard Kostelanetz, *Conversing with Cage*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 110.

“The Theater of Cruelty (First Manifesto)”: “That is to say: instead of continuing to rely upon texts considered definitive and sacred, it is essential to put an end to the subjugation of the theater to the text, and to recover the notion of a kind of unique language half-way between gesture and thought.”¹⁰⁷ Kostelanetz’s interview divulges the emphasis Cage and his collaborators placed on *freedom* in their interpretation of Artaud’s manuscript. Just as the theater could be freed from the text, the expression of one art form could be freed from the expression of another. In this way, no art form is subordinate to another in a hierarchical structure wherein one medium reigns supreme.¹⁰⁸

For Artaud, the “unique language half-way between gesture and thought” was associated with a feeling that was lost in contemporary theater—a “Danger” that pianist David Tudor decided to confront head-on. According to Artaud, “The contemporary theater is decadent because it has lost the feeling on the one hand for seriousness and on the other for laughter; because it has broken away from gravity, from effects that are immediate and painful—in a word, from Danger.”¹⁰⁹ To “realize this idea of danger on the stage” once again and to meet that point between gesture and thought, is through a concept Artaud calls the “objective unforeseen, the unforeseen not in situations but in things, the abrupt, untimely transition from an intellectual image to a true image...”¹¹⁰ He continues: “for example, a man who is blaspheming sees suddenly and realistically materialized before him the image of his blasphemy (always on condition, I would add, that such an image is not entirely gratuitous but engenders in its turn

¹⁰⁷ Artaud, 89.

¹⁰⁸ For instance, in ballet, the music usually supports the dance and is subordinate to the choreography. This is not the case in Cage-Cunningham collaborations. Music and dance occur simultaneously and thus without regard for such hierarchical structures.

¹⁰⁹ Artaud, 42.

¹¹⁰ Artaud, 43-44.

other images in the same spiritual vein, etc.).”¹¹¹ For David Tudor, the intellectual image involved the formation of memory relationships in the brain, formed while looking at a musical score (especially in repetition). According to Tudor, this occurs, “because the moment you see a relationship between several sounds there is an intellect at work, not the sounds themselves.”¹¹² To transition to the true image and call on the “objective unforeseen,” Tudor would have to *not* remember and break memory relationships. Through this “true image” he could then objectify sounds and “let sounds be themselves.”¹¹³

Because the “objective unforeseen” depends on the immediacy of abruptness, Smigel’s exploration of Tudor’s realization of the idea uncovers the importance of *presence* which underscores Artaud’s conception of theater. Tudor’s journey into *The Theater and Its Double* began with performing Boulez’s Second Piano Sonata in December of 1950; the former having a great impact on his preparation of the piece: “It was a real breakthrough for me, because my musical consciousness in the meantime changed completely...I had to put my mind in a state of non-continuity—not remembering—so that each moment is alive.”¹¹⁴ Less than one year later, he performed Cage’s *Music of Changes* in July of 1951, the preparation of which mirrored that for Boulez’s sonata: “I had to work on moment-to-moment differences...I had to learn how to be able to cancel my consciousness of any previous moment, in order to be able to produce the next one.”¹¹⁵ Of course, by this time, Cage had also been introduced to Artaud through Tudor and/or

¹¹¹ Artaud, 44.

¹¹² Tudor, 26.

¹¹³ Smigel, 190.

¹¹⁴ Smigel, 173.

¹¹⁵ Tudor, 24.

Boulez.¹¹⁶ Thus, for *Music of Changes*, Cage's instructions to Tudor also place emphasis on the singularity of the moment: "the guiding principle for performance should be to act so that each action is itself (that means infinitely different and incomparable, single, never before or ever later to occur, so that each moment makes history)."¹¹⁷ This mirrors Artaud's insistence "that all words, once spoken, are dead and function only at the moment when they are uttered, that a form, once it has served, cannot be used again and asks only to be replaced by another, and that the theater is the only place in the world where a gesture once made, can never be made the same way twice."¹¹⁸ Presence, for Artaud, is a fleeting space that results after the sense of danger, a space of physical materiality created by the actors in which they perform being caught *between* gesture and thought. The latter is eventually conquered and gesture is what happens in space and time.

Smigel highlights the significance of Tudor's conscious break from continuity in performance: "The music was to be experienced not in terms of a developmental narrative requiring the application of memory, but rather as a visceral engagement with the present..."¹¹⁹ Whereas Cage's instructions for the *Music of Changes* desired the performer to "make history,"

¹¹⁶ It is uncertain as to if Boulez or Tudor first introduced Artaud to Cage. According to Smigel: "Also, it is not certain whether Cage's cursory interest in Artaud was animated by Boulez. If Boulez shared his enthusiasm for Artaud with Cage during their time together in Paris in 1949, Cage made no reference to the dramatist until Tudor studied *Le Théâtre et son double*. Cage first mentions Artaud at the end of 1950, in the same letter that introduces Tudor to Boulez, following the pianist's performance of the sonata. It was independent of Cage that Tudor procured the writings of Boulez, and subsequently those of Artaud. When he first met Cage in 1949, Boulez was definitely interested in Artaud: his article 'Propositions' had been published only the year before and he continued to refer to the dramatist in several writings after Cage's visit. It is possible that Boulez simply did not mention Artaud to Cage. Probably, Cage found no immediate use for the ideas of the dramatist until their applicability—that is, their correlation to such Zen principles as 'unimpededness and interpenetration'—was made evident by Tudor, with whom he was now collaborating" (Smigel 2007, 180).

¹¹⁷ Smigel, 181.

¹¹⁸ Artaud, 75.

¹¹⁹ Smigel, 173.

Tudor realized that if history was “made,” in the next performance he would have to break from its narrative bounds, as well as, from those of his own mind and body to perform in the present.

2.2.2 The Artaud-Derrida Connection: From Presence to Play

For Artaud, “presence” was defined by the immediacy of the moment and a conscious break from continuity in time. Whereas Smigel’s article investigates the significance of this idea on Tudor and Cage during the 1950s, this influence can be further illuminated by another contemporaneous take on Artaud: that of Jacques Derrida, a philosopher who was responding to the same set of social and political concerns as those addressed in performances of *Variations V* by Cage and his collaborators during the 1960s.

By the mid-1960s, Derrida, like the Cagean circle of musicians, composers, and artists, had also encountered the work of Artaud. He is the subject of two of Derrida’s essays in *L’écriture et la différence*. In these essays, “La Parole soufflée” and “La Clôture de la représentation,” Derrida supplements his philosophical inquiry into Western metaphysics (aka deconstruction) with a reading of Artaud’s writings on theater.¹²⁰ Less than a mere critique of Artaud, as Allen Thiher describes in an article for the *French Review* which tackles these two essays, Derrida’s study reveals that, “as a discoverer once again of tragedy, Artaud is a reflection of Derrida’s own tragic vision of culture, for Derrida’s readings invariably condemn one to a repetition of the roles distributed by an unchanging epistemē that operates with the relentlessness

¹²⁰ Essays written between 1959 and 1967.

of a tragic fate.”¹²¹ Artaud is yet another figure whose attempts to escape Western metaphysics—in this case the text—only lead to his own demise, insanity.

In Derrida’s reading of *The Theater and Its Double*, Artaud’s conception of theater parallels writing in terms of its existence as a representation of a representation. As Thiher explains:

According to metaphysical, *parole*, or speech is the representation of transparent thought, and writing is in turn a representation of that representative speech. In an analogous manner classical theater is a representation of a representation—a *repetition* of a text representing a logos present in a God-author’s mind. The overcoming of the metaphysics that determines madness demands that Artaud reduce language to something other than a representative signifier pointing to some transcendental concept. He must fill the stage with words that are words before words, incantatory cries that maintain their primeval and sacred force as sign-things.¹²²

In order for theater to manifest itself presently and exist “dangerously” “*between* gesture and thought,” Artaud attempts to obliterate the text and therefore escape repetition. This presence exists before and without representation. Derrida finds Artaud’s desire to return to a primordial origin in theater—that of pure presence—to be impossible. How can theater exist outside of representation? As Derrida highlights in his reading of *The Theater and Its Double*, even Artaud was conscious of the impossibilities of this idea: “Artaud knew that the theater of cruelty neither begins nor is completed within the purity of simple presence, but rather is already within representation, in the ‘second time of Creations,’ in the conflict of forces which could not be that of a simple origin.”¹²³

¹²¹ Allen Thiher, “Jacques Derrida’s Readings of Artaud: ‘La Parole soufflé’ and ‘La Clôture de la Représentation,’” *French Review* 57, no. 4 (March 1984): 508.

¹²² Ibid, 506.

¹²³ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 248. The heart of the problem is analogous to the difficulty Derrida faced in accepting Heidegger’s project of the destruction of metaphysics. Derrida follows Heidegger in his definition of metaphysics as a term to designate a way of thinking based on the essence of truth, which “culminates with Nietzsche, who ‘reverses’ metaphysics by giving

To counter Artaud, Derrida introduces an antagonist of his own: absence, a character whose relationship is vital to the nature of presence. Derrida argues for a stage on which the two *play*. On this stage action has begun, and because it has begun, representation has as well with repetition—however, repetition not of the same, but of difference. This is what allows for play, as Derrida explains:

Because it has always already begun, representation therefore has no end. But one can conceive of the closure of that which is without end. Closure is the circular limit within which the repetition of difference infinitely repeats itself. That is to say, closure is its *playing* space. This movement is the movement of the world as play. ‘And for the absolute life itself is a game.’ (*OC* 4:282) This play is cruelty as the unity of necessity and chance. ‘It is chance that is infinite not god.’ (*Fragmentations*) This play of life is artistic.¹²⁴

This repetition of difference is not of presence, but a disruption of it, through a play of absence and presence. Although there is a closure of representation, no inside exists without an outside. This play of difference between absence and presence allows for a movement of signification within the closure of representation.

priority to art over truth (see Nietzsche, *Will*)” (see Niall Lucy, *A Derrida Dictionary* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, 76). As Heidegger argues, (unlike Nietzsche, who did not question the essence of truth at all), the “way out” of metaphysics is through absence. Niall Lucy summarizes Heidegger’s point: “This is to rethink absence beyond its opposition to presence, or to think of absence as a kind of quasi-presence that is essential to being” (Lucy, 77). To think beyond absence, however is to go back to the origins of metaphysics, not historically or locally, but structurally, through a process called, “destruction: a critical process in which the traditional concepts, which at first must necessarily be employed, are de-constructed (*Kritischer Abbau*) down to the sources from which they were drawn’ (see Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 22-3). Derrida agreed with Heidegger throughout his discussion of Nietzsche and also absence; however Heidegger’s concept of a destruction of metaphysics, in its evocation of a lost (“homeland”) of Being was for Derrida, “always horribly dangerous and wildly funny, certainly grace and a bit comical.” This may be found in Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, eds. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 68. Although, Heidegger’s process of destruction sounds very similar to Derrida’s deconstruction (at the outset in name alone), as Lucy explains, the problem with it “from Derrida’s point of view, lies with the notion of deconstruction ‘down’”, as though deconstruction stood for a process of disintegration or distillation down to some kind of primordial or proto-metaphysical essence which remains somehow hidden to metaphysics while functioning also to inaugurate it” (Lucy 2004, 77). Instead, Heidegger’s notion of the destruction of metaphysics more closely mirrors Artaud’s destruction of the text in his own attempts to escape Western metaphysics: both seek to return to a primordial origin. For Heidegger, this origin involved a return to absence, for Artaud it involved the purity of presence through the “dangerous” “objective unforeseen.”

¹²⁴ Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 250.

Under this Derridean lens, a similar play of absence and presence may be thematized for performances of *Variations V* during the 1960s. On this stage, presence is manifested in the immediacy of performance, as well as, in the events that occur in a positive conception of time and space. This presence, however, cannot be without absence, or the indeterminate parameters and relationships between gesture and sound in the performance. In his readings of Artaud, Derrida highlights the impossibility of expunging the theater (and also writing) of repetition; however, he also emphasizes that through an acceptance of absence, repetition is of difference and not of the same. Likewise, in performances of *Variations V*, determined choreographic events, although resulting in the similitude of gesture, triggered sound events whose indeterminate parameters ultimately resulted in the repetition of difference. Therefore, what Derrida found missing from Artaud's notion of theater is exactly what illuminates an even stronger socio-political meaning for performances of *Variations V*. Within the "circular limits" of representation there is play and a movement of signification—what Derrida calls *différance*.

2.2.3 Différance and the Movement of Signification

It is because of *différance* that the *movement of signification* is possible only if each so-called 'present' element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself..."¹²⁵

Jacques Derrida began referring to *différance* as early as 1963. His most concentrated discussions on the subject exist in *Speech and Phenomena* and in an essay titled, "Différance," published in *Margins of Philosophy*. At the center of this essay is Derrida's concern with the

¹²⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 13. Italics my own.

system of language, and particularly the difference between writing and speech, as demonstrated initially through the words “difference” and *différance*. “Difference” and *différance* are not the same as a result of two separate vowels; however, if they were to be read aloud, an audible difference could not be heard. Hence, “the ‘graphic difference’ between “difference” and *différance* is purely recognizable through writing,” and *as* writing.¹²⁶ In this example, what forms the identity of *différance* is literally its difference from difference. But is the difference between “difference” and *différance* only made possible through that of the present?

As can be inferred from my earlier explanation of Derrida’s reading of Artaud, Derrida’s answer to this question in his essay is a resounding: “no.” *Différance* exists *between* speech and writing and resists what Derrida calls “one of the founding oppositions of philosophy, between the sensible and intelligible.”¹²⁷ In this resistance to sensibility and intelligibility, the “in-between status” of *différance* cannot be exposed because “one can expose only that which at a certain moment can become *present*, manifest, that which can be shown, presented as something present, a being-presented in its truth, in the truth of a present or the presence of the present.”¹²⁸ *Différance*, on the other hand, “is never offered to the present.” It “*is not*, does not exist, is not a present being (on) in any form...”¹²⁹

Despite Derrida’s claims that *différance* is “neither a word nor a concept,” he employs “a simple and approximate semantic analysis that [demonstrates]...what is at stake” and thus also emphasizes the importance of recognizing that which is “neither a word nor a concept.”¹³⁰ He begins with the French word, *différer* (Latin, *differre*); a verb which may be identified through

¹²⁶ Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 3.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 5.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 5-6.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 6.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 7.

two meanings. It may first be understood as “the action of putting off until later, of taking into account or taking account of time and of the forces of an operation that implies an economical calculation, a detour, a delay, a relay, a reserve, a representation.”¹³¹ In this case, Derrida relates *différer* directly to temporization, and thus “to temporize, to take recourse, consciously or unconsciously, in the temporal or temporizing mediation of a detour that suspends the accomplishment or fulfillment of ‘desire’ or ‘will.’”¹³² *Différer* may also, and more commonly indicate the state of not being identical, or of being other. In this sense, the definition of the verb relies less on *time* and more on *space*, as explained by Derrida, “When dealing with *differen(ts)(ds)*, a word that can be written with a final *ts* or a final *ds*, as you will, whether it is a question of dissimilar otherness or of allergic and polemical otherness, an interval, a distance, *spacing*, must be produced between the elements other, and be produced with a certain perseverance in repetition.”¹³³ In the English language these two meanings are characterized by two different words: to defer and to differ.

Differents and *differends* are both nouns that correspond to *différer* to indicate a state of not being identical. As Alan Bass explains in his clarification of Derrida, their homonym, *difference*, “does not convey the sense of active putting off, of deferring (*différance* in what would be its usual sense in French, if it were a word in common usage), or the sense of active polemical difference actively differing with someone or something.”¹³⁴ As Derrida points out, “the word *différence* (with an *e*) can never refer either to *différer* as temporization or to

¹³¹ Ibid, 8.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid, footnote, 8.

différends as *polemos*.”¹³⁵ Even though there is no gerund that would normally be constructed from the present participle of *différer*, *différant*, “to compensate—economically—this loss of meaning,” Derrida calls on the polysemic term, *différance*, the “-ance,” ending of which according to Derrida, in the French language, “remains undecided *between* the active and the passive.”¹³⁶ As a noun, the term literally exists in-between the two meanings of the present participle, “differing” and “deferring,” and also temporization and as spacing. This existence in its undecided state cannot exist presently.

Because *différance* is not “a present being,” it problematizes the concept of the sign and signification, as conceptualized by Saussure:

The sign is usually said to be put in the place of the thing itself, the present thing, ‘thing’ here standing equally for meaning or referent. The sign represents the present in its absence. It takes the place of the present. When we cannot grasp or show the thing, state the present, the being-present, when the present cannot be presented, we signify, we go through the detour of the sign...The sign, in this sense, is deferred presence.¹³⁷

This definition seems to be in direct correspondence with the initial sense of *différer*, given that a sign acts as a temporal detour. As Derrida highlights, this correspondence implies “*signification as the différance* of temporization.”¹³⁸ However, as Derrida’s semantic analysis demonstrates, *différance* encompasses more than temporization and the act of deferring: it is caught in between differing/spacing and deferring/temporization, and thus can never act as a representation of presence. The sign, on the other hand, has “always meant the representation of presence, and has been constituted in a system (thought or language) governed by and moving

¹³⁵ Ibid, 8.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 9.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

towards presence.”¹³⁹ Therefore, Saussure’s sign (in and of itself) remains irreducible. As Niall Lucy summarizes in his *Derrida Dictionary*, this put him slightly at odds with Derrida: “For what the sign’s unity occludes, on Derrida’s account, is the necessity of its relations to an exteriority, to what is ‘outside’ the sign but nonetheless indissociable from it.”¹⁴⁰ What is “outside” of the sign does not necessarily exist in presence: difference does not depend on presence. Therefore, what disrupts this sense of presence is what Derrida refers to as “play”—not just in regards to absence or presence, but between the two. In Lucy’s words:

This means that in order for anything to be understood in terms of presence (to be self-sufficient, say), what has to be overlooked is its inscription within ‘a system of differences and the movement of a chain’—a chain or series of ‘signifying and substitutive’ marks (*Writing and Difference*, 292). This system is the play of presences and absences....Without...absence, there could be no presence.¹⁴¹

Even though “in the *system* of language, there are only differences,” there is no fixed system of difference (with an e): “these differences play: in language, in speech too, and in the exchange between language and speech.”¹⁴² This play of difference between differing/deferring, absence/presence, and temporization/spacing, allows for a movement in regards to signification. *Différance* hosts this movement and *is* “movement according to which language, or any code [including musical], any system of referral in general, is constituted ‘historically’ as a weave of differences.”¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Ibid, 10.

¹⁴⁰ Niall Lucy, *A Derrida Dictionary* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 144.

¹⁴¹ Lucy, 95.

¹⁴² Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 11.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 12.

2.3 CUNNINGHAM'S VOICE AND THE SHEAF OF *DIFFÉRANCE*

To elucidate this “weave” of differences, Derrida compares his analysis to a sheaf:

...I would like to attempt, to a certain extent, and even though in principle and in the last analysis this is impossible, and impossible for essential reasons, to reassemble in *a sheaf* the different directions in which I have been able to utilize what I would call provisionally the word or concept of *différance*... the word *sheaf* seems to mark more appropriately that the assemblage to be proposed has the complex structure of a weaving, an interlacing which permits the different threads and different lines of meaning—or of force—to go off again in different directions, just as it is always ready to tie itself up with others.¹⁴⁴

Because of its complex assemblage as sheaf, there is nowhere from which to begin tracing *différance*. It puts into question as Derrida articulates, “precisely the quest for a rightful beginning, an absolute point of departure, *a principal responsibility*.”¹⁴⁵

The concept of the sheaf is what foregrounds a Derridean play of *différance* in performances of *Variations V* in the mid-1960s. To understand this complex structure, is to address the individual agents in charge of the different aspects of sound, image, and choreography: the sound engineers, John Cage, David Tudor, James Tenney, Malcolm Goldstein, and Frederic Lieberman; the lighting designer, Beverly Emmons; Merce Cunningham, the choreographer; and visual artists, Stan VanDerBeek and Nam June Paik. Although Leta Miller’s account of their collaboration in her article paints an expository picture of the individual responsibilities of the collaborators, it does not associate the collaborative efforts with any sort of meaning—personal, social, political, or cultural. *Variations V* brought together many artists and musicians. These individuals took part in an intricate “collage of authorities,” which created a

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 3.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 6. Italics are my own.

web of relations, a metaphorical Derridean sheaf that consisted of potential interactions between multiple modes of media that featured indeterminate and determined elements. Crucial insight into the multimedia design of *Variations V* can be gained by considering the responsibility of Cage's equal partner in conceptualizing the piece, the choreographer, Merce Cunningham. Knowledge of his agency in the structure of the sheaf of *différance* puts into question "precisely the quest for a rightful beginning, an absolute point of departure, a principal responsibility."¹⁴⁶

Cunningham's insistence on detailed accuracy was known by all of the dancers in his company. According to Gus Solomons, a performer in *Variations V*, "Clarity of movement was all there was...It forced us to be absolutely precise."¹⁴⁷ It is no surprise, then, that Cunningham had a detailed and predetermined vision of the choreographic events for *Variations V*. He expressed this vision through a multitude of personal notes and sketches, currently held at the Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archives in New York City—materials that have, until this date been left untouched by scholars interested in *Variations V*, despite its relevancy in understanding the space of the stage, the agency of choreography and its interaction with sound and image during performances of the 1960s.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 6.

¹⁴⁷ Leta Miller, 555.

¹⁴⁸ The Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archive is currently held at 55 Bethune St., New York City, NY 10014, on the second floor; however, materials are slowly being moved to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The MCDC Archivist, David Vaughan informed me that the MCDC Archive will remain in the NYPL permanently once the transition is made. The archival materials for *Variations V* consists of 47 pages of notes and sketches contained within a file folder labeled simply, "Variations V." The pages of notes are not numbered; nor are they dated.

2.3.1 Events Unfolding in Time and Moving Across Space

Perhaps the most organized papers of Cunningham's notes and sketches for *Variations V* are the multiple outlines he produced detailing the order in which choreographic events were to take place.¹⁴⁹ Although slightly different in detail and design, these outlines are drafts of the same sequence of events and demonstrate Cunningham's predetermined vision for how the events should unfold in time, in *every* performance of *Variations V*.

There are four outlines divided into eleven sections. Each section delineates a choreographic event that will take place in a certain amount of time. Depending on the level of detail provided in each outline, it may or may not include further information about the gestures of the choreographic event. Despite such minute differences, the nomenclature and order of events between these outlines is very similar, as demonstrated in Table A- 1 of Appendix A. This table is comprised of three out of four of Cunningham's outlines of the order of events in *Variations V*. Although these three outlines are provided individually as Tables A- 2 through A- 4 in Appendix A, in Table A- 1, I have redistributed the rows to show the consistency between Cunningham's considerations of how the choreographic events should unfold in time. Eight out of the eleven events are the same in name: "Enter," "MC/1 ½," "CB/Solo," "Leaping," "MC & BL/Duet," "CB/trio," "Aerial Sweeps," and "MC/Solo & Chase." There are strong parallels that exist between the outlines in regards to the amount of time that should elapse for each event. For instance, all three outlines state that event number four, Carolyn Brown's solo, should last for

¹⁴⁹ Although my earlier reference to "event" regarded all possible media events, whether aural, visual or choreographic, in this case Merce Cunningham specifically labels and categorizes his gestures as "events."

four minutes. Likewise, event number six, the duet between Merce Cunningham and Barbara Lloyd, should last about three minutes.

The fourth outline, Table A- 5 in Appendix A, strays farther from the other three in its nomenclature and order of choreographic events. Although this outline includes how long each event should last in terms of minutes, Cunningham does not always elucidate *who* will be performing the choreography, as he often does in the other three outlines of Table A- 1. The incompleteness of the fourth outline is comparable to other sketches in the collection of Cunningham's material for *Variations V* in which the choreographer is less specific in regards to time: lists of choreographic events and acts. On sheets of notebook paper, Cunningham's sketches resemble acts of brainstorming, as demonstrated in Figure 2.1. Because Cunningham did not include dates on any of his sketches or notes in the collection for *Variations V*, it is not possible to state definitively as to whether or not one outline came before another. However, if the four outlines and lists are compared in consideration of his inclusion of time, dancer's initials, and the order of events (as compared to what we know took place in the film from 1966), it is possible to get a sense of which sketches were earlier drafts and which were perhaps later in design. Nevertheless, the drafts compellingly illustrate that Cunningham's choreographic visions, from the outset of the collaboration, were anything but indeterminate.

change, the design of the outline in *Changes* is also unique: it details the actions for each dancer. Cunningham created ten columns. The first column gives the event number, the second column provides the general and overriding action of the event, and the third column indicates the length of time for each event. The following seven columns are assigned to each performer, as represented by their initials at the top of the page: “MC” (Merce Cunningham), “CB” (Carolyn Brown), “BL” (Barbara Lloyd), “GS” (Gus Solomons Jr.), “PS” (Peter Saul), “SN” (Sandra Neels), and “AR” (Albert Reid). If the dancers were to perform in an event, an “X” indicates their involvement; if they were not to dance, “exit off” or “—” is written. No matter the design, Cunningham’s original drawings for *Variations V* demonstrate the extent to which the choreographer had a clear linear progression of events in mind for the conception of how the movement of dance would unfold in time.

Because there were antennae and photoelectric cells on stage to interact with the movements of the dancers, Cunningham’s notes for *Variations V* also incorporate sketches and drawings of how choreographic events would move across the stage. For instance, on one page he drew nine rectangles, provided here as Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3. Each rectangle represents the space of stage, at different moments during the performance.

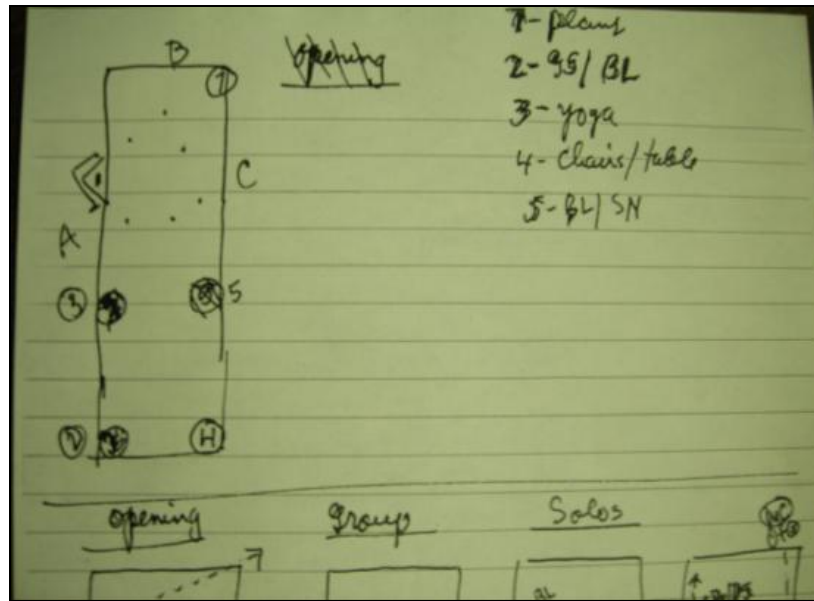


Figure 2.2 Sketch of the stage for the placement of props and positioning of the dancers in the opening of *Variations V*. Merce Cunningham, choreographic notes, *Variations V*, 1965, Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archives, New York. Reprinted with permission.

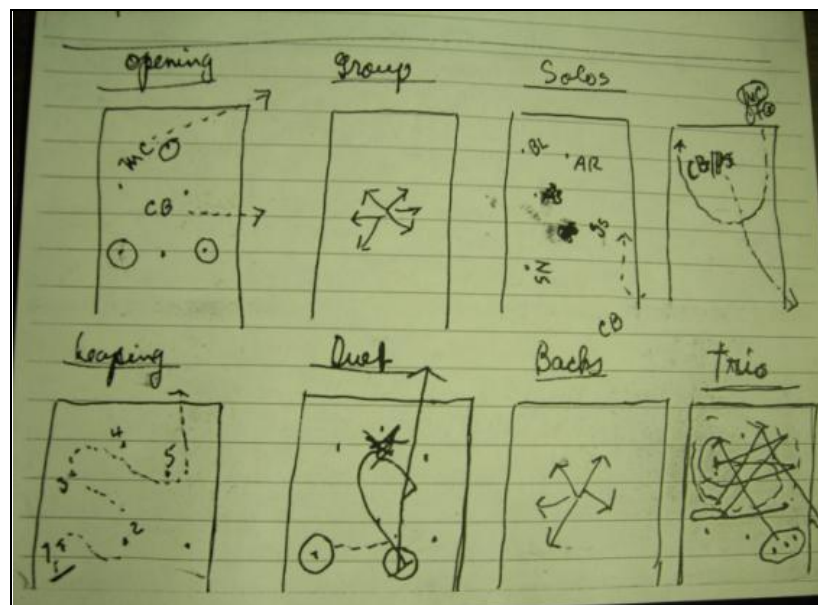


Figure 2.3 Sketches of the stage for choreographic events. Merce Cunningham, choreographic notes, *Variations V*, 1965, Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archives, New York. Reprinted with permission.

In the bottom half of the page (In Figure 2.3), Cunningham provided a rectangle titled, “opening” on which he depicted the direction of how “MC” (Merce Cunningham) and “CB” (Carolyn Brown) will enter the stage and circled which antennae should be affected to produce sound. Indeed, MC is the first dancer to walk on stage in the filmed version of the performance. He enters from stage left while carrying a plant, walks diagonally across the stage and places the plant down. After four rectangles (the fifth event) there is another rectangle labeled “Leaping.” For this drawing an arrow winds around five of the antennae, tracing exactly the procession of leaping the dancers take in the film. The drawing also corresponds to the order of Cunningham’s linear portrayal of events in his outlines for the order of events in *Variations V*: “Leaping” is included in all three outlines as the fifth event. However, this is not the case for the other rectangles, which appear out of order in comparison to that given in the outlines. Nevertheless, these drawings depict how the dancers were to interact with the spaces of the stage and how integral the antennae were to this interaction. Whether they were leaping, performing solos or duets, crawling, sweeping, or huddling, Cunningham made sure the movement was performed around the antennae in order to trigger a relationship with sound.

2.3.2 “Aerial Sweeps”

To speak of the sheaf of *différance* in *Variations V*, I turn to the last ten minutes—the point of Cunningham’s choreography given the title, “Aerial Sweeps.” In the film, Cunningham walks on stage from the front, stage right. There is the quiet dripping of water on a drain. An image of a pueblo is projected behind Cunningham on a screen. One after another the dancers follow imitatively. They jump, step, skip, jeté, and leap, dispersing from the back, stage left of the stage

and to the front. A boat's low horn sounds...and again. Now there is an abstract painting projected behind them...it switches to graph paper. There are two films: one of an airplane taking off, over and over again, and one of Cunningham dancing. The dancers perform the same balletic actions in repetition. Radio noise, quiet voices, and loud vacuum-like sounds. Carolyn Brown is the last to finish the sequence.

Although Cunningham's devotion to a linear progression of events implies his careful choreographic preparation for *Variations V*, his sketches for the event titled "Aerial Sweeps," demonstrate the extreme extent to which the choreography was predetermined. He allocated three pages of notes to the choreographic event. The first page is a drawing of the stage which also outlines a specific order in which the dancers were to gather together, disperse in movements, regroup, and move across the stage in repetition. After arranging an order, Cunningham's notes indicate that they should "sweep" the area of the stage with the movements of their bodies four times and regroup three times. See Cunningham's eight instructions listed on the bottom of Figure 2.4.

The drawing of Figure 2.4 also includes the initials of the four male dancers (Cunningham, Gus Solomons, Albert Reid, and Peter Saul) and three female dancers (Carolyn Brown, Barbara Dilley Lloyd and Sandra Neels) for *Variations V*, with dashed lines along the sides of the stage and straight lines diagonally across the stage. Even though it is not clear as to what dancers followed which lines, it is clear that they *did* follow them as routes across and around the stage, determined by Cunningham before the premiere performance. This is also evident on the second page devoted to the "Aerial Sweeps." See Figure 2.5.

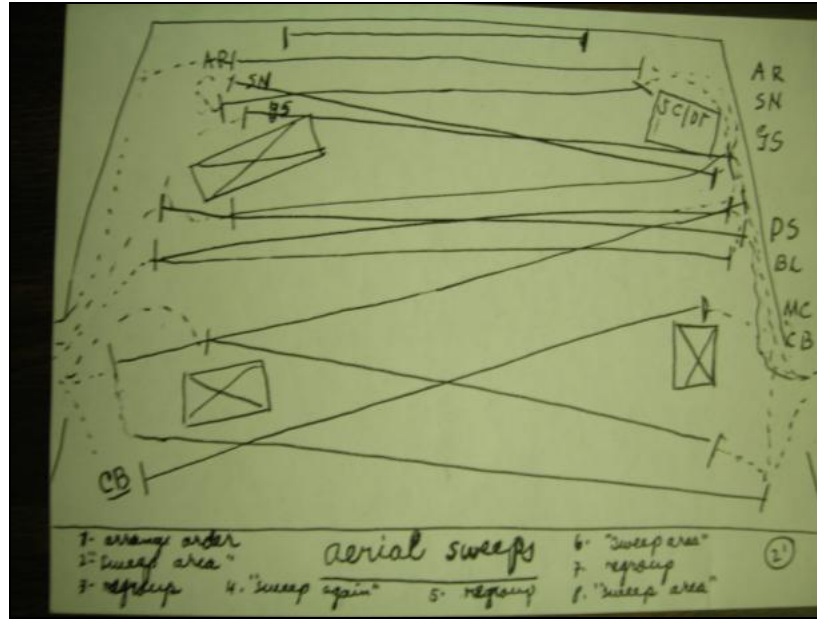
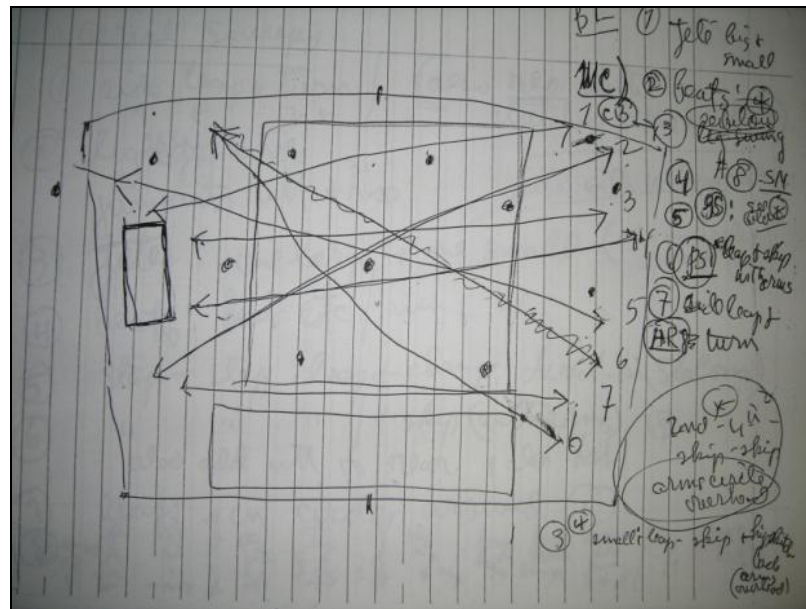


Figure 2.4 Notes detailing the choreographic “Aerial Sweeps” in *Variations V*; specifically the order of sweeping and regrouping. By Merce Cunningham, choreographic notes, *Variations V*, 1965, Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archives, New York. Reprinted with permission.



Similar to Figure 2.4, this drawing by Cunningham of the stage also features diagonal and horizontal lines; however, there are half as many, and the routes for the dancers do not consist of any dashed lines. On the right-hand side of the page the initials of all seven dancers appear again. Initially they seem to correspond to a list of eight instructions, beginning with “BL, 1.) jeté big & small.” Further down this list however, the initials stop aligning with the balletic gestures, and some numbers are not even given a corresponding movement even if they are assigned an initial. As a sketch, this drawing demonstrates a “working out” of the space of the stage for the “Aerial Sweeps” design. In this way, it is more of a sketch than the previous page.

Following the drawing seen in Figure 2.5, however, there is an accompanying page, provided in Figure 2.6—the third page detailing the “Aerial Sweeps.” It is a more finite list of the eight instructions in regards to the dancers’ movements. I have reproduced them here in text:

1. Side leap & turn [(also rep. with leg stretched to the side on 3)]
 - 1 & 2 &
2. Leg lift circle; jump into att. & rise
3. Jetes: one large & one small—(also: with collapse on 3) (also in circles around antennae)
4. Beats: beat etc/run & repeat
5. Step—step—leap & change direction (slalom)
6. Step—step—leap & skip (with arms; also add att to rear & close
7. Leaps in circles around poles
8. Drawn choreography (stick figures)

On this page Cunningham does not assign any one dancer to each of the eight instructions. Although the dancers “arranged an order,” as so directed in the first instruction of Figure 2.4, *all* were expected to “sweep the area.” An examination of Cunningham’s multiple sketches for the “Aerial Sweeps” reveal an intricate eight-part dance event that was repeated (“swept”) four times after the dancers initially arranged order, and regrouped thrice. The event only lasts about two minutes, as indicated on the bottom right-hand corner of Figure 2.4, as well

as in Cunningham's outlines for the order of all choreographic events in *Variations V*, such as the chart printed in *Changes: Notes on Choreography*.¹⁵¹ While watching these two minutes on film, they seem full of sporadic ideas; however, after examining Cunningham's meticulous notes on the movements of the dancers, the feeling of randomness cannot be derived from the choreography.

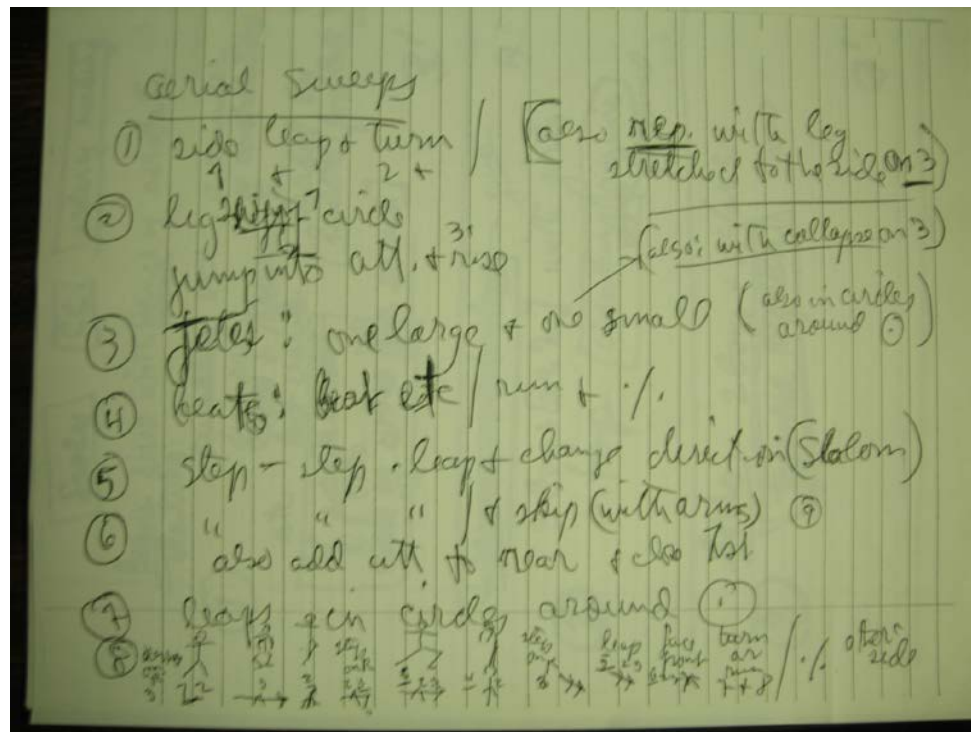


Figure 2.6 List of instructions for the individual movements of the “Aerial Sweeps” in *Variations V*. Merce Cunningham, choreographic notes, *Variations V*, 1965, Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archives, New York. Reprinted with permission.

Cunningham's drawing shows a regular setup wherein the musicians, labeled “JC/DT” (John Cage/David Tudor) on one diagram, are always on stage right in a rectangle. He was also

¹⁵¹ The “Aerial Sweeps” is listed as the eleventh event of twelve and lasts approximately 2’29”.

consistent in depicting one screen towards the back of the stage to represent where the images were to be projected. This implies that the drawings were prepared for the premiere performance and not the subsequent tour in Europe in which multiple screens appeared. The number of antennae in Figure 2.5 also supports this conclusion; there are twelve instead of the six that traveled overseas for the European tour. (Figure 2.7 illustrates this conclusion in regards to the field of transmission of the antennae (i.e., the circles around the dots) as well.) These details in Cunningham's drawings demonstrate that the choreographer always exhibited a concern for the agency of his counterparts. Not only did he incorporate the possible presence of films and photographic imagery behind his dancers, but he also wove his choreography around the sensors which triggered production of sound.

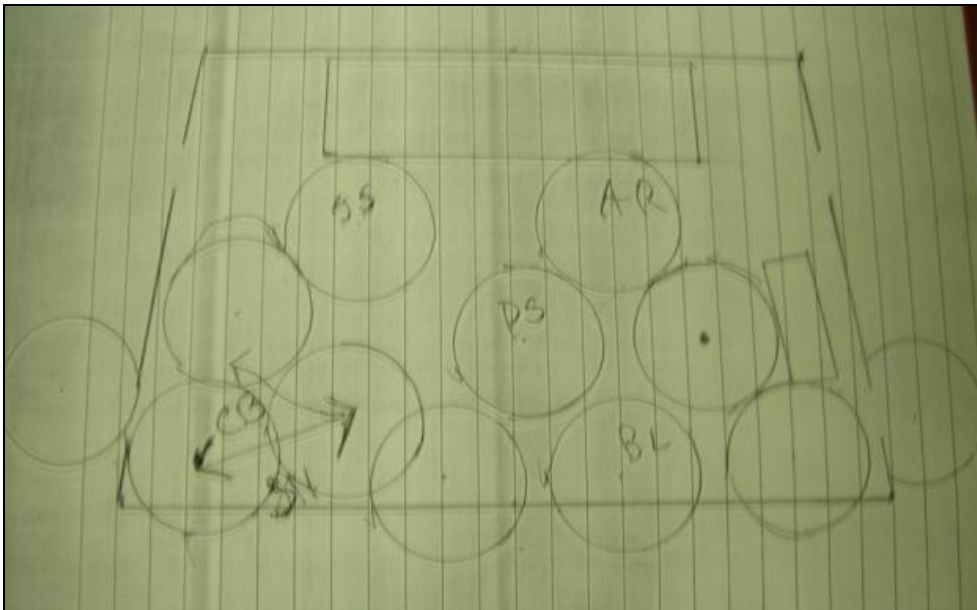


Figure 2.7 Space of the stage for *Variations V*, including the placement of the projector screen (back of stage); musicians (stage left); and antennae. Merce Cunningham, choreographic notes, *Variations V*, 1965, Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archives, New York. Reprinted with permission.

The web of authority pertaining to sound comprised an intricate system of checks and balances. Although Cunningham's choreography acted as an agent of authority that generated sound whenever a dancer passed a photoelectric cell or antenna, neither the choreographer nor the dancer could determine the parameters of the resulting sound, how loud or soft it would be, or how long it would last. John Cage selected the tapes that were operated by James Tenney, Malcolm Goldstein, and Frederic Lieberman: he thus chose the taped sound world. Even though Cage preselected the types of sounds, he relinquished control over their order and occurrence. Whenever the dancers triggered an antenna or cell, Tenney, Goldstein and Lieberman chose how to operate the tape recorders thereby selecting the actual sounds from Cage's gamut. This choice by all men was done improvisatorially, as recollected by many of the original collaborators. In an interview with Leta Miller, for instance, Goldstein reminisced: "I operated the tapes in the spirit of not knowing what would come out."¹⁵² As a check on the authority of everyone involved with the sound world were sounds that emanated from twelve short-wave radios—sounds obviously not able to be predetermined by any collaborator. Adding to the authority of the men controlling the tape recorders and radios were Cage and David Tudor at the dials of Mathews's fifty-channel mixer, the function of which was to control the amplitude and duration of the output of all sounds.

Once Merce Cunningham began the "Aerial Sweeps," any taped or radio sound could have resulted, as controlled by James Tenney, Malcolm Goldstein, Frederic Lieberman, David Tudor *and* John Cage—no one man was responsible for the production of sound singlehandedly. Thus, despite Cunningham's careful attitude towards his choreographed unfolding of events, as

¹⁵² Telephone interview conducted with Malcolm Goldstein by Leta Miller on July 31, 2000. In Miller, 553.

well as preselected sounds and images, in the relationship between sound and the gesture of dance, there was a continuous changing flow of relations between agencial forces and indeterminate action.¹⁵³

2.4 CONCLUSIONS

I began discussing Cunningham's choreographic role in performances of *Variations V* during the mid-1960s through a description of the 1966 film: a two-minute segment titled "Aerial Sweeps." Whereas Cunningham's choreography remained relatively the same for each performance, as his detailed notes demonstrated, the indeterminate parameters of sound resulted in indeterminate interaction between sound, image, and gesture. Consequently, a description of *Variations V* could instead read as: Cunningham walks on stage. A short second of silent air. A photo of an assembly line followed by a portrait of an old man. One after another the dancers they follow imitatively. They jump, step, skip, jeté, and leap, dispersing from the back of the stage to the front. The sound of a dripping drain interrupts the sound of a vacuum. Now there is a geographical map projected behind the dancers...it switches to graph paper. There are two films: one of a coffee commercial and one of Cunningham dancing. The dancers perform the same

¹⁵³ Although the images were not triggered by the photoelectric cells or antennae, the same may be said of the relationship between the choreography and the order and timing of the visual imagery, produced by Stan VanDerBeek and Nam June Paik. As the evidence suggests, the order of the imagery in the premiere performance was predetermined by VanDerBeek and played straightforwardly as gestures activated sound. In the filmed performance, however, a woman (possibly Beverly Emmons, the lighting designer) operates the film reel and appears to assert control in regards to the order and frequency of filmed imagery. The images are, however, never activated by the movement of the dancers.

balletic actions in repetition. An operatic tenor and the faint sound of instrumental music. Carolyn Brown is the last to finish the sequence.

To continuously describe the multitude of possible interactions between sight and sound in *Variations V*, however, is to miss the point: it is impossible to “reassemble in a sheaf the different directions...” of *différance*. Instead, *Variations V* evokes the Derridean sheaf, woven by a collage of authorities, and determined and indeterminate relations which foster the play of *différance* and a movement of signification. As authority is passed and overlapped, the interaction between the images, sounds and gestures changes. This foregrounds the movement of *différance*, which cannot “be” or “exist” precisely because it is caught in between the “present” relations of the collaborators, the presence of the sounds, gestures and images they make, and the “absence” of indeterminacy. As historically contextualized in the first part of this article, the sights and sounds in *Variations V* demonstrated an interest in the same ecological concerns as those addressed in mass media. However, the collaborators for *Variations V* widened the limited perspective of single media outlets (newspapers, the television, the radio) and united them on one stage. By no means were these images, gestures and sounds only ecological in concern. Multiple topics in the news, on television and on the radio could have appeared in concert halls in which *Variations V* was to be performed in the mid-1960s. What they signified was *always and already possible*.

To understand the movement of *Variations V* is not to grasp just the politics of representation in the presence of its sights and sounds, but also the signification that could result through the potentiality of the culture of indeterminacy. The slippage of *différance* allows for any number of ecological, political or technological statements. Through this Derridean play, John Cage, Merce Cunningham and the rest of the collaborators of *Variations V* undermined

received representational hierarchies and thereby critically engaged with American culture during the 1960s.

3.0 AN ORDER WE ARE NOT LOOKING FOR: COLLAGING CALDER PIECE

Four percussionists stand equidistantly on stage. At the center is a mobile by the American artist, Alexander Calder. Each performer has an array of instruments at hand: “the skins of drums, the discs of cymbals and gongs, the spheres of temple blocks and bells, and the keys of xylophones, marimbas and vibraphones.”¹⁵⁴ From their static stance the percussionists begin “rubbing fingernails and stick ends over their traditional instruments.”¹⁵⁵ Barely audible sounds. Deep groans, buzzing, and rattling. Hollow wails. Slowly, the percussionists leave their traditional instrumental stations and approach Calder’s sculpture: “they mix with the branches of the mobile and activate it.”¹⁵⁶ Striking the petals and branches with mallets and drum sticks, they produce “...tiny clicks and taps without much ring.”¹⁵⁷ The percussionists return to their percussion instruments. A metallic herd stampedes the ears of the audience. Another pass to the mobile, where each percussionist “carries wrapped mallets and the mobile is transformed into swinging gongs and suspended cymbals.”¹⁵⁸ Rattling, scraping, knocking. “Some of the percussionists choose to chase the mobile in flight, others stand and wait for certain parts to move toward them,

¹⁵⁴ Pierre Descargues, *Tribune de Lausanne*, March 5, 1967.

¹⁵⁵ Joan La Barbara, “Earle Brown’s Hommage to Alexander Calder,” *Musical America* (July 1980): 13.

¹⁵⁶ Descargues.

¹⁵⁷ La Barbara, 13.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

hitting them as the objects pass.”¹⁵⁹ Intricate, spontaneous choreography: “It is a ballet and a game.”¹⁶⁰

On February 27, 1967 Diego Masson and the First Percussion Quartet of Paris premiered *Calder Piece* at the Theatre de l’Atelier in Paris. A work for four percussionists, *Calder Piece* employs a palette of almost one hundred percussion instruments, ranging from cowbells to pedal tympani, to vibraphones, to ceramic drums, and one stabile mobile by Alexander Calder—the “Chef d’Orchestre.” By incorporating the sculpture by Calder it appeared as if the composer, Earle Brown, relinquished control by relegating the actions of the performers to the unpredictable movements of the mobile. However, Brown balanced the unpredictability associated with Calder’s mobile, as well as indeterminate parameters incorporated in the musical score, with the determinacy of his own authoritative voice.

The beginnings of Brown and Calder’s collaboration may be traced to 1963 when Brown and percussionist, Diego Masson, drove to Saché in France to ask Alexander Calder for a favor. Brown had been in Paris completing a piece for tape and orchestra, entitled *TimesFive*, for the Service de la Recherche of the French Radio when Masson, who was forming the First Percussion Quartet of Paris, commissioned him to compose a work for the new group. The commission of a percussion quartet prompted Brown to turn to the artist whose conception of mobility had continued to influence his compositional aesthetic since the early 1950s, Alexander Calder.¹⁶¹ He thought: “wouldn’t it be marvelous if I could figure out a way to have a Calder

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Descargues.

¹⁶¹ According to Brown: “Those who are familiar with my work are aware that the original impulse and influence that lead me to create ‘open form’ musical works (which, in 1952, I called ‘mobile compositions’) came from observing and reflecting on the aesthetic nature and lifelike qualities of the mobiles of Alexander Calder. Earle Brown, “Transformations and Developments of a Radical Aesthetic,” *Current Musicology* 67/68 (Fall 1999): 53. He

mobile function as a conductor of the four musicians in the percussion quartet?”¹⁶² Brown hoped not only for the creation of musical mobility but, also, the physical presence of a mobile by Calder.

To persuade his artistic exemplar and friend, Brown and Masson decided to make a personal visit to Calder’s home one afternoon in 1963. Fortunately, the multimedia collaboration immediately enticed Calder:

He [Calder] said, ‘Oh yes, that sounds like a great idea, that sounds terrific, that sounds very good.’ He said, ‘you know I’ve made mobiles which do have beaters on them.’ He had made a few mobiles with brass, percussion mallets-like. When the wind moved it, this thing would come and clink against the mobile-thing. And I told him that my idea was to actually have the percussionists play on the mobile and he didn’t object to that at all.”¹⁶³

After lunch was devoured, much wine consumed, billiards played, and even the “flat on Sandy’s Citroen” repaired, the collaboration was set into motion. Calder would provide a mobile for Brown’s percussion piece. While the artist worked on his own contribution to the project, Brown went ahead and started to compose his score:

In Paris (in 1963) I began work for the Quartet with the idea that it would be ‘conducted’ by a mobile in the center of the space, with the four percussionists placed equidistantly, in four corners, around it; the varying configurations of the elements of the mobile being ‘read’ by the performers, and the evolving ‘open form’ of each performance being a function of the movements of the mobile, and subject to the scoring and ‘choreography’ of the performers’ movements.¹⁶⁴

also relayed it to Dore Ashton. She states: “Brown’s early encounter with Calder’s mobiles was, he says, ‘the original impulse and influence which led me to create ‘open form’ works, which, in 1952, I called ‘mobile compositions.’” In Dore Ashton, “Earle Brown’s Continuum,” *Arts Magazine*, January 1982.

¹⁶² Earle Brown in a pre-concert discussion of *Calder Piece* on April 5, 1992 at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, NY. This concert was part of the North American New Music Festival. The recording of the discussion and the performance of *Calder Piece* is housed in the Music Library at the State University of New York, Buffalo: Catalogued as NAF 585. Earle Brown, *Calder Piece*, North American New Music Festival, Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY, April 5, 1992.

¹⁶³ Brown, pre-concert discussion, *Calder Piece*, NAF 585.

¹⁶⁴ Earle Brown, “Transformations and Developments of a Radical Aesthetic,” *Current Musicology* 67/68 (Fall 1999): 55-56.

Brown's conception of the mobile's role did not change once he received it three years later. However, the composer did have to reconsider some musical parameters. As Brown explained, "The final scoring of the piece had to wait for the mobile to be finished because various aspects of the score and performance were directly based on the number and color of the elements and their physical placement in the structure of the mobile (however, it turned out to be 'Calder Red,' which called for some hasty rethinking on my part)."¹⁶⁵ By 1966 "everything came together and the work was finished,"—what Brown called "a very intricate 'feedback' condition between the mobile, the score, and the performers."¹⁶⁶

I investigate the multi-dimensional character of *Calder Piece*'s "'feedback' condition" in the second section of my dissertation, which is comprised of two chapters. This exploration extends themes of collaboration, movement, potentiality and multi-mediated relations, discussed in the previous chapter. Unlike *Variations V*, however, the collaboration of *Calder Piece* inhabits a much smaller scale. Six people contribute to its design: the composer, Earle Brown, the artist and sculptor, Alexander Calder, and four percussionists. The smaller number of people is but a façade, veiling the multitudinous and layered "feedback condition" in and of performance. Just as performances of *Variations V* depended on the slippage between (pre)determined and indeterminate artistic elements, *Calder Piece* too consisted of this dynamic relationship.

In her review of *Calder Piece* for an exhibition at the Neuberger Museum at the State University of New York at Purchase in 1982, the renowned art historian and critic, Dore Ashton, highlighted the "continuum" of influences on Brown's compositional aesthetic; a "culture Brown

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 56.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 56.

built for himself [that] was atypically nourished from outside sources.”¹⁶⁷ This included not only the inspiration for the work by its namesake, Alexander Calder, but also Jackson Pollock, James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Jean-Paul Sartre, Stéphane Mallarmé, Max Ernst, Gertrude Stein and Henri Bergson. To explore the multiple layers of Brown’s “feedback condition,” I examine the importance of two figures from this continuum on the composition of *Calder Piece*, Calder and Henri Bergson.

Spontaneity, impermanence, flexibility, and mobility: this language conveys the visual rhetoric of Calder’s mobiles. Whereas the impact of Calder’s work on Brown may be better known for its stimulation of Brown’s method of “open form,”—“a condition of mobility” in which emphasis is placed on the collaboration between the composer, performers and/or the conductor, its manifestation in *Calder Piece* has been largely misunderstood.¹⁶⁸

To date, the balance between mobility and the determinism of form has been largely misconstrued in an understanding of *Calder Piece*. There are many reasons for the misconception, beginning with the severe lack of scholarship on Brown’s music. Instead of exploring his music, Brown is often pigeonholed as a composer defined by three primary associations and achievements: 1.) the so-called “New York School” spearheaded by John Cage; 2.) *December 1952*, the graphic composition alongside Brown’s name in most textbooks for a survey of music history; and, 3.) the conception of “open form” scores. Aware of these generalizations, Brown made the following statement about his oeuvre during a 1995 interview, “I’ve written so much music in so many different ways. I’ve never understood why people want

¹⁶⁷ Definition of “open form” in Dore Ashton, “Earle Brown’s Continuum,” *Arts Magazine*, January 1982.

¹⁶⁸ John P. Welsh, “Open Form and Earle Brown’s Modules I and II (1967),” *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 256.

to put me into a box and throw me away.”¹⁶⁹ The compositional process used to create *Calder Piece* offers an example of one of these “different ways” in which Brown conceptualized music.

Brown’s play of potentiality and form in *Calder Piece* is also overlooked because the collaboration with Calder is not an event with which many are familiar. Brown is the only person to have written about the piece in articles and interviews for scholarly journals. No musicologist has attempted to engage with the primary source material that exists at the Earle Brown Music Foundation in order to initiate a dialogue with Brown, Calder, the performers or any aspect of their collaborative efforts. The materials held at the Earle Brown Music Foundation, include: Brown’s original sketches and pre-compositional materials, performance parts marked by percussionists, sound recordings, multiple versions of the score, photographs, recorded interviews, correspondence, and reviews of *Calder Piece* from multiple European and American performances.

Although the reviews of *Calder Piece* offer rare insight into the audience’s perspective, those conducted by journalists, who are amateurs of music and/or art, have also been responsible for propelling uninformed views of the collaboration, thus furthering its misconception.¹⁷⁰ In these reviews emphasis is placed on Calder’s mobile. For instance, when the *Tribune de Lausanne* reviewed the French premiere, in its description of the stage, the mobile takes prominence rhetorically: “Around the large mobile which *reigns* in the center of the stage, the percussionists are placed in the four corners with their innumerable instruments.”¹⁷¹ Journalists

¹⁶⁹ John Yaffé, “An Interview with Composer Earle Brown,” *Contemporary Music Review* 26, nos.3/4 (June/August): 309.

¹⁷⁰ For informed reviews, see those already noted above by the art historian and critic, Dore Ashton and performer and composer, Joan La Barbara.

¹⁷¹ Italics my own. Descargues.

writing about French performances of *Calder Piece* also focused on the authority of the mobile.

As Claude Rostand wrote for *Le Figaro Littéraire*:

...the dialogue between sound and color is established. Not an approximate and vague one between the sensibilities as it may already have existed in the past, but a dialogue which goes to the roots of things, to the very functional. A symbolic illustration of this has been offered us with this work of Earle Brown, where the conductor is of a new sort, a mobile of Calder, the movements of which *determine* the actions of the musicians.¹⁷²

Similar to such French reviews, those of performances in the United States highlight the role of the mobile by focusing on the indeterminacy that formed as a result of incorporating the animated, inanimate object. In a review of the American Premiere at the Fourth Annual Contemporary Music Festival at CalArts, Robert Commanday of the *S.F. Sunday Examiner and Chronical* commented, “But I would be amazed if a second performance, inevitably different in detail because of the ‘open form’ construction and the mobile, chance conductor, would really create a very different impression.”¹⁷³ This review associates the mobile directly with the composition of the piece. While this is partially correct, the collaboration is not really an “open form construction” in which the creation of form depends entirely on the mobile. The determined aspects of Brown’s score and the freedom given to the performers play vital roles as well.

To reconcile this misunderstanding, the first part of my third chapter traces Brown’s conception of “open form” from its formation in the 1950s to its multitudinous character in the 1960s. This historicization demonstrates how Calder’s influence on Brown and the composer’s consideration of mobility changed between the two decades. Although *Calder Piece*—a collaboration of the 1960s—continued to be shaped by the idea of mobility in Calder’s mobiles, I underscore how Brown’s marriage of mobility with the determinism of form in this collaboration

¹⁷² Italics my own. Claude Rostand, *Le Figaro Littéraire* (August 21-27, 1967).

¹⁷³ Robert Commanday, “A Novel, Explorative CalArts Festival,” *S.F. Sunday Examiner & Chronicle*, 30.

created a compositional aesthetic that persisted throughout the end of the twentieth century. Without knowing the intricacy of *Calder Piece*, a collaged design, Brown's idea of open form during the 1960s is not only misconceived but also becomes a *missed* conception. Consequently, *Calder Piece* turns into an event of *disorder*, ruled by the art object and not sounds.

At the same time Brown created and revised his notion of open form, he also formed a profound interest in Henri Bergson, precisely because the philosopher questioned the notion of disorder, a point of view that struck a personal chord in the composer. In works such as *Time and Free Will*, *Creative Evolution* and *The Creative Mind*, Bergson's ability to find the innate relationship between order and disorder countered the negative and uninformed reception of his music.¹⁷⁴ The second part of Chapter 3 conducts an historical inquiry into these books by Bergson, and the specific passages that interested Brown. Like Calder's mobiles, the philosophical rhetoric of Bergson also continued to stimulate Brown's compositional point of view throughout his life. Through close readings of the composer's personal notes, interviews and articles, a consistent preoccupation surfaces with the philosopher's discussions of duration, perception, and order/disorder. Despite the consistency with which the composer mentioned the philosopher's name in interviews and lectures, however, Bergson's influence has not been investigated by musicologists.¹⁷⁵ Even though Brown never met Bergson, the philosopher's rhetoric served to advocate the composer's organization through form, mobility and collage.

¹⁷⁴ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968). Originally published as *La pensée et le mouvant: Essais et conférences*, (Paris: Alcan, 1934). Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F.L. Pogson (New York: Macmillan Company, 1910). Originally published as *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris: Alcan, 1889). Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (London: Electric Book Company, 2001), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/pitt/Doc?id=2001754&ppg=2> (accessed May 2, 2011). Originally published as *L'évolution créatrice* (Paris: Alcan, 1907).

¹⁷⁵ Brown's interest is articulated in: Earle Brown, "Form in der Neuen Music," *Darmstädter Beiträge zur Neuen Musik* 10 (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne (London: Schott & Co., 1965) or Earle Brown, "Form in New Music," in

The third and final part of Chapter 3 underscores Bergson's ideas of order in *Calder Piece* by revealing the method of "collage" used to compose the music. First mentioned in a letter to John Cage on February 12, 1966, Brown referenced three pieces "scored by a collage-paste-up process" while he was in Europe during the 1960s: *Corroboree* (1964), *String Quartet* (1964-1965) and *Calder Piece* (1963-1966). In my archival research at the Earle Brown Music Foundation, I discovered a unique link between the latter two pieces: Brown quoted from his *String Quartet* to collage *Calder Piece*.¹⁷⁶ Working much like the visual artists whose collages inspired him, such as the surrealist artists, Max Ernst and André Breton, as well as Brown's friend and contemporary, Robert Rauschenberg, Brown copied pre-compositional materials originally intended to compose the piece for strings and then cut and pasted them onto a larger page of blank paper, a leaf in the eight-page score of *Calder Piece*. As I analyze and reconstruct one of the collaged pages from this score I argue for an inherent order in dialogue with *String Quartet*. Even though Brown described *Calder Piece* as "a very intricate 'feedback' condition between the mobile, the score, and the performers," this analysis of collage unveils the "feedback" between *Calder Piece* and *String Quartet*.

Created in the mid-1960s, *Calder Piece* exemplifies how the ideas of artistic, philosophic and literary influences of the time permeated and continued to permeate Earle Brown's compositional thought and rhetoric. In his interview with John Yaffé, the composer reflected:

Source: Music of the Avant-Garde, 1966-1973, ed. Larry Austin and Douglas Kahn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 24-34; Ashton, "Earle Brown's Continuum"; and, Yaffé, "An Interview with Composer Earle Brown."

¹⁷⁶ The source material includes: a personal copy of the performance score held in the Jan Williams Collection of Annotated Scores, 1950-1999, at the Music Library, University of Buffalo, The State University of New York; Brown's pre-compositional materials for *Calder Piece*; the final score *Calder Piece* score published by C.F. Peters; drafts of Brown's directions for performance for *Calder Piece*; the final directions for performance that are in the published score of *Calder Piece*; and, the published score of *String Quartet*. All of these materials are currently held at the Earle Brown Music Foundation.

It's experimentation. It's using your mind, using the culture you're involved with to expand the possibilities. I mean, art is for anything but decoration; it's to expand awareness and to bring things together...I was able to make connections between all these diverse cultural influences, because I was *interested* in everything.¹⁷⁷

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how Brown's interest in "everything" led not only to a unique conception of form but also collaged music in which there is order in seemingly "disordered" events.

3.1 CALDER'S INFLUENCE

Brown concluded his 1999 *Current Musicology* article—in which he explained his compositional influences, notebooks, and pieces—with a double, parallel, quote. Its first half contained a short, witty poem by Jean-Paul Sartre about Calder's mobiles (in Brown's own translation), and its second half contained Brown's version of the poem which featured the composer's own summary of his musical aesthetics:

Calder establishes a general density of
motion for each mobile, then
he leaves it on its own.

The objects inhabit a halfway station
between the servility of a statue
and the independence of nature.
—Jean-Paul Sartre

Brown establishes a general density of
potential for each composition, then
he leaves it on its own.

¹⁷⁷ Yaffé, 299. Italics originally in article.

The sonic elements inhabit a halfway station
Between the servility of form
And the independence of nature.
—E.B. (excusez-moi, J.-P.)¹⁷⁸

The deliberate parallelism established in this quote between visual and the aural media, and between Calder and Brown, was no less revealing than the eighteen pages that preceded it.

As part of the so-called “New York School” of composers, Brown was no stranger to the parallel group of visual artists also experimenting in New York at the time. While Brown enjoyed the spontaneity of gestural paintings by Jackson Pollock, it was the identifiable impermanence of Alexander Calder’s mobiles that most captivated him. In an interview with Derek Bailey, the composer described walking into a museum and encountering a mobile by Calder: “you see a configuration that’s moving very subtly.”¹⁷⁹ Brown continued:

You walk in the same building the next day and it’s a different configuration, yet it’s the same piece, the same work by Calder. It took me a couple of years to figure out how to go about it musically. I thought that it would be fantastic to have a piece of music which would have a basic character always, but by virtue of aspects of improvisation or notational flexibility, the piece could take on subtly different kinds of character.¹⁸⁰

Although Brown did not meet Calder in person until 1953, after first encountering the sculptor’s work in 1948 he felt an immediate kinship with the visual artist’s idea of variability. As he later reminisced, Calder’s mobiles spoke to Brown’s conception of indeterminacy and ideas of time:

In Calder, the construction of units and their placement in a flexible situation that subjects the original relationships to constant and virtually unpredictable, but inherent, change (the movement of the units as well as the movement of the viewer) led me to construct units of rhythmic groups (with assigned intensities but ‘open’ timbre

¹⁷⁸ Brown, “Transformations,” 57.

¹⁷⁹ Derek Bailey, *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music* (London: British Library National Sound Archive, 1992), 60.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

possibilities subject to an independent timbral-density plan), modify them according to previously mentioned ‘generative’ techniques, and assemble them rather arbitrarily—accepting the fact that all possible assemblages were inherently possible and valid.¹⁸¹

3.1.1 Open Form

By the time of Brown’s first meeting with Calder in 1953, the effect of the artist’s mobiles on Brown had manifested into what the composer referred to as “a practical (for *me*) notational expression.”¹⁸² In *Folio and Four Systems* (1954), for instance, each score introduces a new level of ambiguity in its notation. As Brown explained: “I felt that the realizable concepts of physical and conceptual ‘mobility’ in relation to the graphic input by *me* was a practical and creatively ambiguous stimulus to performer involvement and sonic creativity.”¹⁸³ In the first score of the *Folio* series, *October* ’52, Brown notated pitches and rhythms in standard notation; however he destabilized the performer’s playing field by removing all rests. This field is expanded in *November* ’52 through the creation of more lines in between the usual five-line staves. The performer may read the notation indicated on or around these staves from any direction. *December* ’52 requires the most “sonic creativity” by the performer and is the graphic score used as exemplary of mid-twentieth-century, American avant-garde composition in many histories of Western Art Music.¹⁸⁴ As an entirely graphic score, *December* ’52 relies on the improvised actions of the performer and allows for a flexible situation in which form and content are open.

¹⁸¹ Brown, “Transformations,” 40.

¹⁸² Ibid, 41.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ This is much to Earle Brown’s chagrin, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Once again, I refer to his interview with John Yaffé. In it, Brown stated: “Everybody wants to reproduce *December* ’52 and the graphic things. Even Grout, used in colleges, universities and conservatories everywhere, reproduced a page from *Available Forms I*—which everyone was astonished by. But I’ve written so much music in so many different ways. I’ve never understood why people want to put me into a box and throw me away” (Yaffé 2007, 309).

Because the pieces of *Folio* incorporate open content in addition to open form, Brown considered them as “pieces to be steps on the way to making a really, truly open-form composition,” or not yet open-form pieces.¹⁸⁵

Twenty-Five Pages, for one to twenty-five pianos, was Brown’s first composition considered to be “open form” by the composer. Although *Twenty-Five Pages* mirrors the flexibility of Calder’s mobiles, its individual identity also persists by way of “the twenty-five pages of fully described material of pitch, dynamic and duration, in a relative sense, but nevertheless...”¹⁸⁶ The pages may be played in any order with the two-line systems being open to readings in either treble or bass clefs; however, they are fully notated. It is with *Twenty-Five Pages*, then, that an important facet of Brown’s definition of open form emerges:

There must be a fixed (even flexible) sound content to establish the character of the work, in order to be called ‘open’ or ‘available’ form. We recognize people regardless of what they are doing or saying or how they are dressed if their basic identity has been established as a constant but flexible function of being alive.¹⁸⁷

This sound content is not always represented through traditional notation, though. In “The Notation and Performance of New Music,” Brown explained how he used and developed

¹⁸⁵ Yaffé, 301. In Earle Brown, “The Notation and Performance of New Music,” *Musical Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (1986): 180-201, Brown states that “FOLIO was composed between ‘October, 1952’ and ‘June, 1953’ (the titles of the pieces are the dates of the composing) and, as far as I know, they are the first examples of ‘mobile’ or ‘open form’ works” (Brown, “Notation,” 193). However, in his other lecture given at Darmstadt, “Form in New Music,” Brown states: “*December 1952* raises the question of whether a work whose form and content are different in each performance can be called ‘open form.’ My personal answer is no; in order to be called open form, a work must have an identifiable content which can then be *formed*, as in “Twenty Five Pages” or the “Available Forms” works. By this definition, “December 1952” is not a piece of music at all; it is musical activity when performed. This creates a further confusion because the moment it is performed “December 1952” is as much a musical work as any ever *heard*...it is only one’s attachment to the academic concept of literature, an art *object*, that is violated (Brown, “Form” 2011, 27) Brown’s interview with John Yaffé, conducted in 1995, clearly underscores the composer’s opinion about his “route” to open form between *Folio* and *Twenty-Five Pages*: the latter is the first example of how Brown defined his open form compositions of the 1950s.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Parentheses in original quote. Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 70.

“time notation,” graphic notation, and open form.¹⁸⁸ Through this “kind of new notation that...generally tends towards a lessening of precise control and the conscious introduction of ambiguity,” Brown stimulated the performer’s creative output while maintaining his own authority as the composer. By doing so, performances of pieces such as *Twenty-Five Pages*, emulate Calder’s mobiles; they are “never the same twice, but always the same thing.”¹⁸⁹

3.1.2 “Mobile Interior Structures”

By the 1960s, the decade in which Brown composed *Calder Piece*, the composer’s conception of open-form compositions changed. As David Ryan explains, instead of entirely mobile scores, “most of the work since [Available Forms 1 and 2] has generally consisted of a closed formal order within which mobile or open sections are available, either within this closed ‘framing’ or at particular points within the continuity.”¹⁹⁰ Brown referred to these compositions as “closed

¹⁸⁸ In his “Specific Performance Instructions,” for the “Introductory Remarks” of the score for *Available Forms 2*, Brown offers one of his clearest explanations of “time notation”: “This system, which I have called a ‘time notation’, is a development of the work in Folio (1952-1953) and most clearly represents sound-relationships in the score as I wish them to exist in performance: independent of a strict pulse or metric system. It is a ‘time-notation’ in that the performer’s relationship to the score, and the actual sound in performance, is realized in terms of the performer’s **time-sense perception** of the relationships defined by the score and not in terms of a rational metric system of additive units. The durations are extended visibly through their complete space-time of sounding and are precise relative to the space-time of the score. It is expected that the performers will observe as closely as possible the ‘apparent’ relationships of sound and silence but act without hesitation on the basis of their perceptions. It must be understood that the performance is not expected to be a **precise** translation of the spatial relationships but a **relative** and more spontaneous realization through the involvement of the performers’ subtly changing perceptions of the spatial relationships. The resulting flexibility and natural deviations from the precise indications in the score are acceptable and in fact integral to the nature of the work. The result is the accurate expression of the actions of people when accuracy is not demanded but ‘conditioned’ as a function within a human process.” Earle Brown, “Introductory Remarks,” *Available Forms 2 for Large Orchestra, Four Hands*, 1962 (New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 1965). Bolded emphasis in the published text.

¹⁸⁹ Yaffé, 299.

¹⁹⁰ David Ryan, “Earle Brown: A Sketch” in Earle Brown, *Earle Brown: Selected Works 1952-1965*, New World Records, 80650-2/DIDX #090823, (p) and © Recorded Anthology of American Music, Inc., 8.

forms with mobile interior structures.”¹⁹¹ In the published scores for pieces such as *Hodograph*, *Corroboree* (1964), *Times Five*, and *String Quartet* (1965), Brown’s program and performance notes introduce the concept of a fixed overall form, but flexible, mobile structures are kept in order to emphasize performer involvement and the spontaneous exchanges that depend on the moment of performance. For instance *Corroboree*’s performance note states:

The macro-form is fixed but there are degrees of flexibility and spontaneous exchange in most of the interior sections of the form. As in my ‘open-form’ works (a different *form* of the materials in each performance), the possibility of intimate, immediate, and spontaneous exchanges and shifts of action and ‘poetry’ throughout the performance is extremely important.¹⁹²

One year following the publication of *Corroboree*, in his program note for the publication of *String Quartet*, Brown once again incorporated the phrase, “flexibility within inner structures,” in order to strike a balance between a formal identity and the spontaneity of performance:

STRING QUARTET is one of several works in which I have attempted to combine the ‘graphic’ and ‘mobile’—improvisational qualities of the 1952 works (as in FOLIO), and the ‘composed material, open form’ conditions of TWENTY FIVE PAGES (1953) and the AVAILABLE FORMS works of 1961-62. In composing these later works, which use more than one performer without conductor, I have fixed the over-all form but have left areas of flexibility within the inner structures. The works achieve a strong formal identity while maintaining the ‘performer process’ spontaneity and the balance of collaboration between the composition and the performers that are characteristic of the previously mentioned open-form and graphic works.¹⁹³

Conceived at the same time as *Corroboree* and *String Quartet* during the mid-1960s, *Calder Piece* also demonstrates Brown’s play of “mobile interior structures” within a larger macro-form. By incorporating the actual art object which inspired Brown’s ideas of spontaneity

¹⁹¹ Earle Brown, “Form in New Music,” in *Source: Music of the Avant-Garde, 1966-1973*, ed. Larry Austin and Douglas Kahn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 27.

¹⁹² Brown, *Corroboree*, score, publisher’s info.

¹⁹³ Earle Brown, “Program Note,” *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007).

and mobility in musical form, *Calder Piece* exemplifies this play. It evokes the motion of Calder's mobiles in gesture, incorporates a mobile physically, and embodies the mobile within the flexible situations of its interior structures. As a result, in a performance of *Calder Piece*, a "strong formal identity," or the "servility of form," is preserved while simultaneously offering an engagement with performative potentiality—the "independence of nature."¹⁹⁴

Unfortunately, as addressed earlier in the introduction to this chapter, the "independence of nature" was often perceived as dominating the "servility" of Brown's formal structure. The inability of the audience to appreciate the intricacy of their simultaneity was tied directly to a perception of disorder. The association was a strong reason behind the composer's interest in the philosophy of Henri Bergson.

3.2 BERGSON'S INFLUENCE

3.2.1 "Disorder is Simply the Order We Are Not Looking For"

Brown's interest in Bergson commenced at approximately the same time as philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, re-introduced Bergson to the philosophical community through his seminal book *Le Bergsonisme* in 1966. Dore Ashton's review of *Calder Piece*, in which she describes the "outside sources" that culminated to form the composer's unique perspective on musical composition, incorporates this valuable passage in regards to his initial encounter with Bergson:

¹⁹⁴ This references Brown's version of Jean-Paul Sartre's poem in Earle Brown, "Transformations and Developments of a Radical Aesthetic," *Current Musicology* 67/68 (Fall 1999): 57.

Brown's thoughts about music *during the early 1950s* when he was charting his unique path were heightened by his readings. He found Bergson saying 'disorder is merely the order you are not looking for.'¹⁹⁵

Ashton's 1982 review does not specify as to whether or not she interviewed Brown in the 1980s, or whether she drew from his previous writings and lectures, such as the composer's 1964 Darmstadt lecture, "Form in New Music." This lecture provides the first written evidence of Brown's interest in Bergson's quote on disorder. He related it in the following passage:

Of course there is no such thing as a formless thing; it's like what we call 'disorder.' As Bergson says, disorder is merely the order you are not looking for, and that's the way it is with 'formless.' If something were really formless we would not know of its existence in the first place. The same comments apply to the remarks 'no continuity' and 'no relationship.' All of the negatives are pointing at what some claim does not exist. It is the same when people claim that there is 'no communication.' This is obviously a matter of attitude, mental inertia, calcification of outlook. It is so much easier to say 'no' than to confront the actual situation and find the new way of accepting 'yes.'¹⁹⁶

From his employment of Bergson's quote, "disorder is merely the order you are not looking for," it can be surmised that by the mid-1960s, Brown had surely read and contemplated Bergson's ideas of order and disorder. These ideas and this particular quote struck a chord with Brown. Thirty years after the Darmstadt lecture on form, Brown used it yet again in his interview with John Yaffé. To redirect a conversation about the artistic scene of New York City in the 1950s, the interviewer prompted: "You mentioned a walking route to your apartment along which there were bookstores you would frequent. You were reading books on the subject of time."¹⁹⁷ Brown responded with a story that starts not with pieces he wrote in the 1950s while in New York, but one from the 1960s, about *Calder Piece*:

EB: You know, I gave a lecture, one week ago, on my *Calder Piece*. That morning I got a call from a German girl, Ulrike somebody, who was doing research on the relationship of

¹⁹⁵ Ashton, "Earle Brown's Continuum."

¹⁹⁶ Brown, "Form in New Music," 27.

¹⁹⁷ Yaffé, 296.

abstract expressionist art to our—the so-called New York School—music. I said that I was giving a lecture that afternoon and suggested she come. She came. She’s actually an art historian studying in Paris. She obviously knows a lot about philosophy and literature. She said that, at the moment, she was very interested in writing about the connections between order and disorder.

I told her I thought it was interesting she talk about order and disorder, because it had fascinated me so much, at one point. While I was doing research on *Folio*, and into *Twentyfive Pages* and other stuff, I did a lot of research on time. It was one of the things that gave me a great deal of faith in what I was doing. When our music, like *Three Pieces*, *Perspectives*, Morty’s music and John’s music, was played at Carl Fischer Hall, up on 57th Street—David Tudor also played pieces by Berio, Boulez, Stockhausen, Maderna, Bengt Hambraeus, et cetera; a lot of new European music was introduced in those concerts—invariably the critics would say, ‘There’s no continuity to this music. It’s just a jumble!’ And it occurred to me that there is no such thing as *no continuity*. Then I find, in a book called *Time and Free Will* by Henri Bergson, a statement: ‘Disorder is merely the order that you are not expecting’. And that’s what the music critics were doing, expecting a Beethovenian order. It was so stupid to say that there was no continuity.¹⁹⁸

Brown’s story confirms Stein’s claim that Brown began reading Bergson in the 1950s. Brown started working on *Folio* in 1952 and *Twenty-Five Pages* in 1953. At the same time David Tudor began performing concerts at Carl Fischer Hall. Although Brown did not offer Yaffé an exact date as to when he started “reading about time,” the surrounding events of the time period the composer described, clearly point to the early and mid-1950s. Once more, Bergson is the author Brown immediately identified with reading about the “subject about time.”¹⁹⁹

Even though Brown reaffirmed *when* he was introduced to Bergson, there is something very different about this interview passage from Brown’s previous discourse regarding Bergson. In neither Ashton’s review nor in Brown’s Darmstadt lecture did Brown attribute the quote, “disorder is merely the order you are not looking for,” to any source. To Yaffé, however, Brown

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ It is interesting, however, that before relating the scene of the 1950s, Brown leads into the story through his *Calder Piece* lecture. Why did the German girl focus on ideas of order and disorder after hearing this lecture? Could Brown, himself, have related *Calder Piece* directly to the ideas of Henri Bergson?

revealed that he found the quote in Bergson's *Time and Free Will*. However, this quote appears in none of the monograph's three chapters: "The Intensity of Psychic States," "The Multiplicity of Conscious States; The Idea of Duration," and "The Organization of Conscious States Free Will." Bergson does discuss order but never uses the word, "disorder" or *désordre*. If Brown was so inspired by Bergson's words, from where did they originate?

3.2.2 Disorder and Nothingness in *Creative Mind*

Rather than belonging to *Time and Free Will*, Bergson's quote comes from the collection of essays entitled, *The Creative Mind*, published in English in 1946. One essay in this collection, "The Possible and the Real," questions the idea of "nothingness" as capable in articulating any reality, which "as immediately perceived, is fullness constantly swelling out, to which emptiness is unknown."²⁰⁰ In associating its meaning entirely as a consequence of language, Bergson states:

You will see you are dealing with words, not at all with ideas, and that 'nothing' here has no meaning. 'Nothing' is a term in ordinary language which can only have meaning in the sphere, proper to man, of action and fabrication. 'Nothing' designates the absence of what we are seeking, we desire, expect...We perceive and can conceive only occupied space.²⁰¹

Nothing, or something that is perceived as being absent, is thus inseparable from concrete, human reality. As Bergson describes, this relationship occurs at the hand of intellect as a result of suppression or substitution:

Either the idea of a suppression of everything has just about as much existence as that of a round square—the existence of a sound, *flatus vocis*,—or else, if it does represent

²⁰⁰ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 113.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, 114.

something, it translates a movement of the intellect from one object to another, preferring the one it has just left to the object it finds before it, and designates by ‘absence of the first’ the presence of the second.²⁰²

For Bergson it is not “all or nothing,” but potentially all *is* nothing: “Nothing, when it is not that of a simple word, implies as much matter as the idea of All, with, in addition, an operation of thought.”²⁰³ Therefore, when nothing *is* “that of a simple word,” it does not have meaning.

Immediately following this discussion, Bergson reinforces his questioning of nothingness by contemplating *disorder*. He begins, however, by posing a new question: “How is rule imposed upon what is without rule, and form upon matter?”²⁰⁴ Bergson’s initial answer to this question left a major impression on Brown, making it one of the composer’s favorite sayings: “Disorder is simply the order we are not looking for.”²⁰⁵ The quote gains additional depth when considered in the context of Bergson’s further elaboration of the same thought:

You cannot suppress one order even by thought, without causing another to spring up. If there is not finality or will, it is because there is mechanism; if the mechanism gives way, so much the gain for will, caprice, finality. But when you expect one of these two orders and you find the other, you say there is disorder, formulating what is in terms of what might or should be, and objectifying our regret.²⁰⁶

Disorder that is the objectification of regret, or “absolute disorder,” parallels Bergson’s explanation of nothingness in language, or the emptiness that is, because of its existence as mere words (symbols), meaningless. Meaning can be found only in an understanding of disorder that embraces its two orders: “outside us, one order; within us, the representation of a different order

²⁰² Ibid, 115.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 116.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

which alone interests us.”²⁰⁷ Even though the order that is within us is technically absent and therefore “nothing,” *in relation* to the second order; it gains *meaning*. As Bergson explains, “In reality, there is more intellectual content in the ideas of disorder and nothingness when they represent something, than in those of order and existence, because they imply several orders, several existences and, in addition, a play of wit which unconsciously juggles with them.”²⁰⁸

Brown’s misattribution of Bergson’s quote is not surprising. The heart of the idea: that there is something in nothing, presence in absence, order in disorder; and that “the mind leaps from mechanism to finality, from finality to mechanism, and which, in order to mark the spot where it is, prefers each time to indicate the point where it is not,” resurfaces, just like the mind leaping back and forth between all of Bergson’s writings.²⁰⁹ Brown could have encountered all of them. Read in tandem, points of obscurity are clarified. For instance, in his explanation of disorder in *The Creative Mind*, mechanism forms Bergson’s conception of the two orders which coexist in the meaning of disorder. What exactly does Bergson mean by “mechanism”?

3.2.3 Disorder and Mechanism in *Creative Evolution*

Bergson clarifies his notion of disorder in *Creative Evolution*, a monograph published in its English version in 1911, well before *The Creative Mind* (1946). In his third chapter, “On the Meaning of Life—The Order of Nature and the Form of Intelligence,” Bergson dedicates an entire section to the discussion of “the idea of disorder.” Similar to his initial questioning of nothingness in “The Real and the Possible,” he opens his analysis of disorder in *Creative*

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 117.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

Evolution by describing it as an absence, an “absence of order.” Despite disorder’s nonexistence, “it is unquestionable that, when ordinarily we speak of disorder, we are thinking of something.”²¹⁰ To support this statement, Bergson proposes a scenario to demonstrate that the human mind constructs order:

Now, suppose that there are two species of order, and that these two orders are two contraries within one and the same genus. Suppose also that the idea of disorder arises in our mind whenever, seeking one of the two kinds of order, we find the other. The idea of disorder would then have a clear meaning in the current practice of life: it would objectify...the disappointment of a mind that finds before it an order different from what it wants, an order with which it is not concerned at the moment, and which, in this sense, does not exist for it.²¹¹

This sense of expectation, of wanting the order that is not present (“something”), also surfaces in *Creative Mind*. In *Creative Evolution*, however, the wording is slightly different. Bergson explains, “It [disorder] denotes the absence of a certain order, but *to the profit of another* (with which we are not concerned).”²¹² As a result, in disorder, there is an expectation of order that is not fulfilled (*something* that becomes absent)—and an order that is present but ignored in a person’s focus on what is not fulfilled (another *something* that is physically present, but to the perceiver, is for all intents and purposes, absent). Consequently, disorder is “not the absence of the one or another order as the case may be, but the absence of both together—a thing that is neither perceived nor conceived, a simple verbal entity.”²¹³ This explanation of disorder corresponds to Bergson’s explanation of “nothingness” as a “simple word” in *Creative Mind*. When disorder is only understood as a term and not through an understanding of the order and implication of the order of which it encompasses, meaning is lost.

²¹⁰ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (London: Electric Book Company, 2001), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/pitt/Doc?id=2001754&ppg=2> (accessed May 2, 2011), 213.

²¹¹ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 215.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

As soon as he establishes this point, Bergson describes the first and second orders which produce the meaning of disorder. To do so, he asks yet another question, “When I enter a room and pronounce it to be ‘in disorder,’ what do I mean?” His story continues:

The position of each object is explained by the automatic movements of the person who has slept in the room, or by the efficient causes, whatever they may be, that have caused each article of furniture, clothing, etc., to be where it is: the order, in the second sense of the word, is perfect. But it is order of the first kind that I am expecting, the order that a methodical person consciously puts into his life, the *willed order* and not the *automatic*: so I call the absence of this order ‘disorder.’ At bottom, all there is that is real, perceived and even conceived, in this absence of one of the two kinds of order, is the presence of the other. But the second is indifferent to me, *I am interested only in the first*, and I express the presence of the second as a function of the first, instead expressing it, so to speak, as a function of itself, by saying it is *disorder*.²¹⁴

Once more Bergson highlights that the expectation of one order exists in the presence and in relation to another order in the definition of disorder. For the first time, Bergson’s explanation also describes the “first” and “second” orders that coexist. In this quote, the first kind, or what a person expects, and is therefore absent, is called the “willed order.” The second kind, or what the person habitually perceives and is physically present, but does not deliberate about and is therefore perceptually absent, is called the “automatic order.” As a result, “we have substituted *will* for the *mechanism* of nature; we have replaced the “automatic order” by a multitude of elementary wills, just to the extent that we imagine the apparition or vanishing of phenomena.”²¹⁵ Unlike *Creative Mind*, in *Creative Evolution*, Bergson specifies the association of one order to a conscious will of the human mind, and the second order to the automatism or mechanism of nature in his explanation of disorder.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Ibid, 225. Italics on “willed order” and “automatic” my own. Italics on “I am interested only in the first” and “disorder” are by Bergson.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 225-226. Italics my own on “mechanism.” Italics on “will” are by Bergson.

²¹⁶ I use Bergson’s use of the term “mechanism” very specifically here in relation to his discussion of disorder. For Bergson, the exact definition of “mechanism” changes, depending on its use and text. Deleuze also makes this

3.2.4 Disorder and the Self in *Time and Free Will*

The term “disorder” does not appear in *Time and Free Will*. Yet even though Brown did not read “disorder is simply the order we are not looking for” in this text—one of Bergson’s seminal monographs—it is not surprising that the composer related the quote to *Time and Free Will*. The ideas behind Bergson’s explanations of disorder may be found in a passage subtitled, “The Two Aspects of the Self.” In both the *Creative Mind* and *Creative Evolution*, Bergson situates the orders of disorder in relation to human beings, our own selves: “outside us, one order; within us, the representation of a different order which alone interests us.”²¹⁷ In *Creative Evolution*, the latter is the first order, the willed order, or the expected one that is physically absent. This order is situated within our own consciousness. The former is the second order, or the mechanical order, the order that nature automatically gave us instead—our own reflexes. What Bergson describes in “Two Aspects of the Self” in *Time and Free Will* is an initial elaboration of the same doubleness in disorder.

Like the two orders of disorder, there are two poles to the self: the one “inner and individual existence” that is “ever changing, and inexpressible, because language cannot get hold of it without arresting its mobility,” and the social, outer self that has become represented by language, but in its symbolic projection to society exists in an arrested state.²¹⁸ Although Bergson’s use of this internal/external binary already mirrors his description of how disorder is

relation in *Bergsonism*: “The idea of disorder appears when, instead of seeing that there are two or more irreducible orders (for example, that of life and that of mechanism, each present when the other is absent), we retain only a general idea of order that we confine ourselves to opposing to disorder and to thinking in correlation with the idea of disorder.” Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Brooklyn, New York: Urzone, Inc., 1988), 19-20. Originally published as *Le Bergsonisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1966).

²¹⁷ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 116.

²¹⁸ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F.L. Pogson (New York: Macmillan Company, 1910), 129.

situated in relation to the human mind, the example he gives also strengthens the parallel between the duality of order(disorder) and the two poles of the self:

When e.g. I take my first walk in a town in which I am going to live, my environment produces on me two impressions at the same time, one of which is destined to last while the other will constantly change. Every day I perceive the same houses, and as I know that they are the same objects, I always call them by the same name and I also fancy that they always look the same to me. But if I recur, at the end of a sufficiently long period, to the impression which I experienced during the first few years, I am surprised at the remarkable, inexplicable, and indeed inexpressible change which has taken place.²¹⁹

In the beginning of Bergson's story, he describes the ability of the human mind to maintain two impressions at one time; one will last while one will evolve over time. This strongly parallels the way in which Bergson describes the two orders that exist to produce disorder in *Creative Evolution*, and even much later in *Creative Mind*: one order is ignored (does not last), while the other evolves over time because it is cultivated within the mind. There is, however, an aspect of this parallel that slightly differs. In his explanations of disorder, the first order interests humans (this is why the second order is ignored in favor of the first, even though it is physically present). Because it is absent physically, the first order exists only through the will of the individual's conscious mind. As a result, in the formation of disorder, a human being becomes so consumed with inner will—consciousness within the self—that he or she looks beyond the second order, or attention to an outer existence, as a mechanism of nature. In "Two Aspects of the Self," however, the focus is instead on the outer, social life and we thus ignore the inner existence. As Bergson explains, "The reason is that our outer and, so to speak, social life is more practically important to us than our inner and individual existence."²²⁰ This social life becomes immobile because "we instinctively tend to solidify our impressions in order to express

²¹⁹ Ibid, 129-130.

²²⁰ Ibid, 130.

them in language.”²²¹ This is exactly Bergson’s critique of the emptiness of the word “disorder,” in which the impression of ignoring any other order but the one that interests an individual is solidified despite the actual play of order. Although there is an inversion of importance in regards to internal and external roles, the notion of play between duration, or the “perpetual state of becoming,” and immobile impressions which Bergson develops in this section of *Time and Free Will*, strongly mirrors that of disorder in his later monographs.

Whether Brown linked that particular passage from *Time and Free Will* to the quote that he reiterated throughout his entire career—“disorder is merely the order you are not looking for”—is not certain. That having been said, among his personal items held at the Earle Brown Music Foundation there are leaves of typed and handwritten notes that confirm that he did read *Time and Free Will*. First, there are two typed pages from passages in the subsection entitled “The Aesthetic Feelings,” in which Brown highlighted Bergson’s discussion of the movement of music and the ability of music to “suggest” an expression of feelings.²²² See Figure B- 1 and Figure B- 2 in Appendix B.

Of more relevance, however, is a handwritten note (See Figure B- 3 in Appendix B).²²³ On this page Brown copied a quote by Bergson from “Two Aspects of the Self.” In it, Bergson recalls the story of walking in town—one that has been referred to above—to underline how the individual existence becomes masked by its social life, primarily through a solidification of impressions. He uses the story to demonstrate how “language gives fixed form to fleeting sensations.”²²⁴ As a possible way out of the existential impasse, Bergson creates “some bold

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Earle Brown, typed personal notes, n.d., Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

²²³ Earle Brown, handwritten personal note, n.d., Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

²²⁴ Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, 131.

novelist” as someone who could possibly act as an agent in revealing the presence of “becoming” in ourselves even though we have ignored these impressions in favor for the external, social but immobile state of ourselves.²²⁵ By doing so this novelist:

...has made us reflect by giving outward expression to something of that contradiction, that interpenetration, which is the very essence of the elements expressed. *Encouraged by him (novelist) we have put aside for an instant the veil which we interposed between our consciousness and ourselves. He has brought us back into our own presence.*²²⁶

This passage caught Brown’s attention. The composer copied the last two sentences (italicized above) in his handwritten note (Figure B- 3 in Appendix B). Considering the parallels between Bergson’s ideas in “Two Aspects of the Self,” Bergson’s notion of disorder and Brown’s attention to the latter, it is not surprising that he highlighted it. In both his prose on disorder and that regarding the “novelist” in “Two Aspects of the Self,” Bergson emphasizes how a habitual state masks that which occurs in real time, or the present moment. In lifting the veil of a fixed, habitual state/order, Bergson’s novelist uncovers the constantly changing relationship between the self and his or her surroundings. In copying this passage, perhaps Brown thought of himself as embodying this novelist: the artist, composer or creator capable of revealing the present moment—relations, becoming, the continuity of time (and not in the narrative sense), order, or in the case of a performance of *Calder Piece*, the feedback situation. As a result, these philosophies of Henri Bergson not only articulated Brown’s creative impulses for a balance between mobility and order, but also justified Brown’s own artistic mission often misunderstood by the critics.

²²⁵ “Now, if some bold novelist, tearing aside the cleverly woven curtain of our conventional ego, shows us under this appearance of logic a fundamental absurdity, under this juxtaposition of simple states an infinite permeation of a thousand different impressions which have already ceased to exist the instant they are named, we commend him for having known us better than we knew ourselves” (Bergson 1910, 133).

²²⁶ Bergson, 134. Italics my own to highlight what Brown noted.

In Bergson's quote—"disorder is merely the order you are not looking for"—Brown finally found a sympathetic articulation which related to his music, an artistic mission which lifted the "veil" between social fixedness and the freedom of consciousness. In both his Darmstadt lecture and in his interview with Yaffé, Brown called on the quote to respond to the critics' charge of a lack of continuity in his open-form pieces and pieces with "flexible interior structures." Once seated in concert halls these critics did not hear what they had expected to hear and then defined the sounds that they were hearing through the objectification of that disappointment. However, there were certainly sounds occurring: outside the critics, "one order," and within them, "the representation of a different order" which alone interested them.

I examine the apparent (dis)order during *performances* of *Calder Piece* in Chapter 4. The next section of this chapter explores what exists "outside" of the audience's perspective and inside the musical score, a collaged order defined by Earle Brown.

3.3 BROWN'S "COLLAGE-PASTE-UP PROCESS"

3.3.1 Collaging Like Bob

Brown upsets the two-order dichotomy of order and disorder by creating flexible music that depends (partly) on mechanism; this includes his open form pieces, but also *Calder Piece* and those performances dependent on "mobile interior structures." At the same time in his role as the composer Brown also substitutes his own "*will* for the *mechanism* of nature." In *Calder Piece*, Brown's "willed order" takes its form in the practice of collage, a process of collating, cutting

and pasting that consciously orders previously written and/or recorded music in new ways. Inspired by the visual artists who also collaged, some of which are included in “Brown’s continuum” described by Dore Ashton, Brown’s collage practice both adheres and diverges from their techniques. I introduce these influences, beginning with Robert Rauschenberg, and demonstrate the (dis)ordering of musical events through Brown’s textual or compositional collage.

As late as 1985, twenty years after composing his homage to a “one-of-a-kind” Sandy Calder, Brown once again created a piece inspired by an artist who influenced his compositional aesthetic of mobility: *Tracer*, the title of an oil and silkscreen painting by Robert Rauschenberg from 1963. In this piece for flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, violin, cello, double bass and four channels of prerecorded sound, the materials for the string and wind instruments may be played in any order and in any combination, as determined by the conductor. As Cornelius Dufallo explains, because “each channel of prerecorded sound was created as an endless loop (with no functional beginning or ending),” the conductor cannot anticipate the relationship between what the instrumentalists will play and the sounds that will result from the four channels of prerecorded sound.²²⁷

Unlike *Calder Piece*, *Tracer* is entirely open in form. Furthermore, the dialogue between its actors allows for multiple levels of variability: “the relationship of the four prerecorded channels to each other, the conductor’s response to the prerecorded material, the players’ responses to each other (the prerecorded track), and the players’ interpretations of their own

²²⁷ Cornelius Dufallo, “The Aesthetic Impermanence: A Performer’s Perspective of *Four Systems* and *Tracer*,” *Contemporary Music Review* 26, nos. 3/4: 433.

parts.”²²⁸ Although Brown’s conception of open form is most immediately ascribed to the influence of Alexander Calder (as corroborated earlier in this chapter by Brown himself), this technique of layering in open form is more inspired by the artist to whom he pays homage in *Tracer*, Robert Rauschenberg. Like Calder’s mobiles, Rauschenberg’s paintings had given much visual food for Brown’s musical thought since the 1950s and 1960s. Notwithstanding *Tracer*’s rather late birth date, the piece emphatically harked back to those decades of experimentation with collage and interaction with the visual artists living in New York at the time. Brown explains this in his program notes for the piece:

Bob and I have been friends since 1952 and he and his work have been an influence on my work for many years and perhaps my work on his, in the early days. There has always been a layering and collage process in my work; the idea of 2 or more things transforming each other by being in ‘flexible’ relationships to one another. Musical performance allows these relationships to change from performance to performance in a kind of endless re-association of composed elements of that piece. In 1952 I called this a ‘mobile score’ (having been influence by Calder) but it has since been officially called ‘open form’. TRACER, being a kind of ‘homage’ to Bob, has even more of this quality of endless and unexpected transformability than most of my other works, which is a condition that Bob himself might very well utilize if he were to compose sounds in time—which, as we know, he just might—at any moment.²²⁹

Brown’s description of “layering and collage” in his program note for *Tracer* refers to the flexibility of the already-composed materials in a performance of the piece. In an interview with Douglas Cohen Brown described the influence of Rauschenberg on what the composer called his method of “collaging” during the process of composition:

... He had a very big, big studio up here on the left around 10th street, 11th street and during that time I saw an awful lot of him and he...the floor of his studio was littered with newspapers and magazines and things and he would pick something up and put it down and he picked something else up and he put it down and do like this with it and make silk screens at that time. He was making, beginning to do the silk screens. You know and he would pick things up and he would find things and I started writing this *Tracer* and it

²²⁸ Dufallo, 434.

²²⁹ Earle Brown, “Program Notes,” *Tracer*, 1985 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2008). All caps in published score.

occurred to me I'd like to use quotations from myself. So I thought that's the way Bob works. This would be an homage to Bob and so I find pieces of music, for instance the four channels of tape for *Tracer*, the small *Tracer*, are things that I did at Cal Arts by feeding reel recordings of my music through a synthesizer and a gating circuit and the synthesizer would distort and model and so what you get on the 4 channels of tape is this kind of vague thing, "Oh that sounds kind of like an orchestra, or that sounds like pianos, it sounds like... and it would go in and out of focus and that's very much the way Bob worked, it was kind of made by collaging my own music (and I have a lot of music that I wrote) but I brought together music from five or six different pieces for the instruments and used the recordings of a lot of my music as kind a of vague backdrop."²³⁰

Inspired by both image and text, Rauschenberg used ready-made materials in his collaged, silkscreened paintings, such as cutouts from newspapers and magazines. Brown, too, worked from pre-composed materials to create his musical collages; however, instead of using music by other composers, he chose to select from his own oeuvre. In *Tracer*, the process of collaging "based on Bob's way of working" did not incorporate previously composed scores that would mirror the textual, paper process of Rauschenberg's method. Instead Brown worked from previous recordings of his music.²³¹ The four prerecorded channels of tape contained collaged musical material by Brown, referred to by the composer in his "Program Notes" for *Tracer*: "The instrumental material is all music composed by me (as are the sounds on the tapes) scored in an 'open-form' context—spontaneously combined, juxtaposed, modified and 'formed.'"²³² By creating this collage of sound events, Brown juxtaposed a variety of timbres that continuously switched aural focus. The use of pre-recorded sound material harkened back to Rauschenberg's process of collaging and a piece by the artist made through this process: the title exhibits dynamic self-referentiality. As stated in conversation with Douglas Cohen:

Earle Brown: Yeah, yeah it's definitely based on that. It's based on Bob's way of working.

²³⁰ Earle Brown, interview by Douglas Cohen, "MD21 EB Interview by Douglas Cohen" (2:21:48 to 2:23:52).

²³¹ Brown, interview by Cohen (2:23:55).

²³² Brown, "Program Notes," *Tracer*.

Douglas Cohen: But also tracing on your own music.

Earle Brown: Yeah, yeah traces of my own music coming in and out of focus...²³³

The continuous movement of Brown's collage in *Tracer* mirrors the impermanence of Calder's mobiles. Although such dynamism incurs unpredictability, Brown's method of collaging in *Tracer* demonstrates order within seemingly "disordered" events.

3.3.2 Collaging Like the Surrealists

Even though *Tracer* was his first and only musical homage to Rauschenberg, it was not the first time he had been inspired by the artist's technique of collage. While Brown was in Europe during the mid-1960s, John Cage sent Brown a letter, requesting the composer's contribution to his upcoming book, *Notations*. As a collection of manuscripts that Cage gathered from composers and music publishers during the middle of the twentieth century, *Notations* "shows the many directions in which music notation is now going."²³⁴ It is a rare book published by Something Else Press and features the partial notation of two hundred and sixty-nine composers.

Brown's response to Cage's letter was written on February 12, 1966 (See Figure B- 4 and Figure B- 5 in Appendix B). In it, Brown detailed the pieces he had written while in Europe—*Corroboree*, *Calder Piece*, and *String Quartet*—as well as *how* they had been composed. Each had been "scored" through a "collage-paste-up process":

Everything I've written over here (*Corroboree* (3 pianos), *Calder Piece* (Perc. Qtt.) and *String Qtt.* have all been 'scored' by a collage-paste-up process which results in rather large pages which must be photo reproduced—(no transparent master sheets, except of

²³³ Brown, interview by Cohen (2:23:55 – 2:24:02).

²³⁴ John Cage, *Notations* (New York: Something Else Press, 1969), no pagination.

the ‘generalized’ material which is collaged)—these collages will have to go to AMP [American Music Publishers] for printing before I can let them go. The ‘original masters’ of everything else are either at the apt. or AMP. What I have here are some of the original sketches of the materials in Av. Forms II, which are more ‘interesting’ visually than the final scoring, I think —sketchy drawings, notes, comments to myself, false starts, etc.,—better than a ‘finished’ thing, as rehearsals are more full of life than performances...²³⁵

Unlike *Tracer*, for the composition of *Calder Piece*, Brown worked directly with the score in his process of collage and not prerecorded sound material. Working initially with paper, his process mirrored the visual artists who inspired him. This list included not only Bob Rauschenberg, but also surrealist artists and poets such as Max Ernst, André Breton and Tristan Tzara.

The influence of surrealism on Brown’s creative process and output has not been weighed by scholars as heavily as the influence of the abstract expressionist painters who were living in New York during the 1950s. However, in a questionnaire about the importance of the visual arts on his music, Brown included surrealism in addition to abstract expressionism, Alexander Calder, Jackson Pollock and Bob Rauschenberg, when asked ‘is there an artist, an oeuvre, a single work or a certain stylistic direction of art having inspired your creative work?’²³⁶ (See Figure B- 6 in Appendix B.)

In response to the next question, “Could you point out your personal experiences with such encounters?” Brown provided a timeline of when he read and encountered the surrealist work of Breton, Ernst and Tzara; when he personally met Max Ernst in 1949; when he first started reading and seeing pieces by the abstract expressionists in New York; and, when he personally met Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Philip Guston, Mark Rothko,

²³⁵ Earle Brown, to John Cage, 12 February 1966, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

²³⁶ Earle Brown, questionnaire, n.d., Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

“Bob” Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Claes Oldenburg, and Frank Stella. (See Figure B- 7 in Appendix B.)

The “collage-paste-up” process the composer described in his letter to Cage strongly resonates with the “material mode of cutting and pasting distant elements” employed by the surrealists, a method recently examined by Elza Adamowicz in *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image*.²³⁷ In the introduction to her monograph, Adamowicz provides an overview of surrealist collage in the 1920s and 1930s. She defines surrealist collage as “manipulating already existing signs...a privileged mode of creating the surreal.”²³⁸ By incorporating pre-existing materials:

Collage effectively anchors surrealist activities in the real, thanks to the ‘reality’ of its processes, which unmask, critique and renew the perception of utilitarian reality and modes of representation and expression. Disrupting the accepted order of reality, it constitutes a critique of artistic and social codes.²³⁹

The disruption of this reality is contingent on the visibility of expressing the process of collage. As Adamowicz describes:

In contrast to traditional expectations in aesthetic production of material finish, semantic coherence, seamless narrative, and the integration of parts into the body of the text, leaving smooth contours, in surrealist collage the scars left by the grafting of spare limbs remain visible. The appropriation and assemblage of disparate fragments, in aggressive or discreet juxtapositions, are inscribed in surrealist collage as a visible gesture or a performative act—which explains the recurrent motif of the pointing hand, the frame within the frame, the theatre set or podium—in the overt staging of seams, material tears, semantic incoherence, iconographic anomalies or narrative nonsequiturs.²⁴⁰

As a result, surrealism disrupts or even escapes reality because the viewer is exposed to visual or verbal incongruities. In *Calder Piece*, the “material mode” of creating the score with pre-existing materials mirrors the surrealist act of collage; however, the performance score does

²³⁷ Elza Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 13.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

not overtly show evidence of this cutting and pasting process. Rather, as an oblique parallel to surrealist collage, Brown's "collage-paste-up" process only reveals itself in the cut and pasted pre-compositional material for *Calder Piece*.

Of course, the collaged score is only one part of the "feedback condition" in the exchange of relations in *Calder Piece*. In addition to this textual collage, other parts include: the mind of the performer, the diversity of influences and the visual-aural interplay. Yet an analysis of one page of the score, although extracted from this collaborative effort, already reveals "order we are not looking for," in the way Brown collages his compositional materials. Whereas surrealism disrupted "the accepted order of [visible] reality," Brown ordered anew the events of a preconceived musical reality, the pre-compositional material for his *String Quartet* (1965), to create the third page of *Calder Piece*. Although removed from its premiere performances in Europe (in the 1960s) and the United States (in the 1980s), in its relation to *String Quartet*, Brown's collaged pages of *Calder Piece* demonstrate a "feedback condition" that "impl[ies] several orders [and] several existences."²⁴¹

3.3.3 Cutting and Pasting Page 3 of *Calder Piece*

The third page of the score for *Calder Piece* alternates between systems comprised of two and four lines. There are eight systems in total: four duets and four systems in which all four percussionists play as an ensemble. This vacillation between duet and ensemble playing follows the "Directions for Performance" for page 3, which indicate that "each system is [to be] read

²⁴¹ Bergson, *Creative Mind*, 117.

horizontally across the whole page.”²⁴² Each system is also unique and specific in its instrumentation. This instrumentation aligns with the percussion instruments Brown assigned as sections to each of the four performers on the first page of the score. See Table 3.1. As a result, Brown designated percussionists 1 and 3 to play “marimba” or “glocks” because these are the two pitched instruments assigned to them from the very beginning of the piece. Likewise, percussionists 2 and 4 play “xyl.” or “vibes” on page 3 because these are the two pitched percussion instruments at their disposal. Although in six of the eight systems the percussionists play on pitched instruments, in two of the systems they play on non-pitched instruments. Both of these systems include various levels of indeterminacy in regards to instrumental selection. In the first system each percussionist may choose the non-pitched instrument; however he or she must move in a specific order, determined by the materials from which their instruments are made—from “wood” to “metal” to “skin” sounds. In the second of these systems, the performer has more liberty in the selection of sound. The score simply instructs the performer that the non-pitched sounds should be “mixed.”

²⁴² Earle Brown, “Directions for Performance,” *Calder Piece*, 1963-1966 (New York: C.F. Peters, 2011).

Table 3.1 Four groups of instruments assigned to each percussionist in *Calder Piece*.

1	2	3	4
Glockenspiel Marimba	Xylophone Vibraphone	Glockenspiel Marimba	Xylophone Vibraphone
3 cymbals	3 cymbals	3 cymbals	3 cymbals
12 cowbells	4 cowbells	4 cow bells	4 cowbells
1 tam tam	1 tam tam	1 tam tam	1 tam tam
1 gong	1 gong	1 gong	1 gong
1 brake drum	1 brake drum	1 brake drum	1 brake drum
5 temple blocks	3 temple blocks	3 wood blocks	3 temple blocks
1 log drum	1 log drum	1 log drum	1 log drum
1 ceramic drum	1 ceramic drum	1 ceramic drum	1 ceramic drum
1 set of bongos	1 set bongos	1 set bongos	1 set bongos
1 set of timbales	1 pedal tom-tom	1 set timbales	1 pedal tom-tom
3 tom toms	3 tom toms	3 tom toms	3 tom toms
1 conga drum	2 conga drums	1 conga drum	2 conga drums
1 pedal tympani	1 tympani	1 pedal tympani	1 tympani
1 “normal” tympani		1 “normal” tympani	

Graphically, page 3 transitions seamlessly from left to right, from system to system, and note to note; that is until the bottom right-hand corner (See Figure 3.1). In this system, percussionists 2 and 4 play a duet on their xylophones before all four performers converge at the mobile to play on the “Chef d’Orchestre” “with medium-soft mallets.”²⁴³ Unlike the other systems, the two lines of this duet feature gaps in the ledger lines. These gaps, if read in tandem with Brown’s letter to Cage, subtly hint at the “collage-paste-up process” that the composer used to produce page 3 of *Calder Piece*. A certain method of collaging from his own musical texts is revealed through the analysis of Brown’s pre-compositional materials held at the Earle Brown Music Foundation Archive in the drawer labeled, “Calder Piece.”

²⁴³ Earle Brown, *Calder Piece*, annotated score, Jan Williams Collection of Annotated Scores, Mus. Arc. 10.1, Item 14, Music Archives, University of Buffalo, State University of New York, NY, 3.

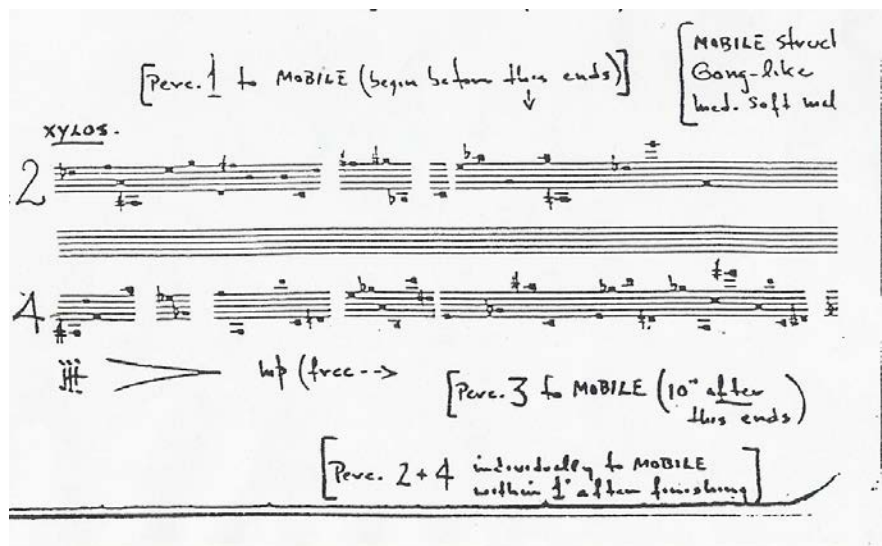


Figure 3.1 Eighth system of page 3 of *Calder Piece*. All percussionists are instructed to go to the mobile, playing the mobile solos. Earle Brown, *Calder Piece*, annotated score, Jan Williams Collection of Annotated Scores, Mus. Arc. 10.1, Item 14, Music Archives, University of Buffalo, State University of New York, NY. Reprinted with permission.

In the drawer labeled “Calder Piece” at the EBMF Archive, there are five pages of musical material on manuscript paper grouped together as the pre-compositional material for *Calder Piece*.²⁴⁴ None of the pages were labeled by Brown; however, the content points to the three pieces he mentioned to Cage as having been composed through a “collage-paste-up” process while he was in Europe in the 1960s. The first three pages contain pre-compositional material for *Corroboree* (See Appendix B, Figure B- 8, Figure B- 9 and Figure B- 10). Started in 1963 and completed in 1964, the composition of *Corroboree* intersects with the conception of *Calder Piece*. Even though the EBMF Archive incorporated *Corroboree*’s pre-compositional material as that for *Calder Piece*, Brown did not quote nor collage it into the pages of his percussion quartet.

²⁴⁴ Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

In contrast, the next two pages of manuscript paper include *all* of the musical material found on the third page of *Calder Piece*. These two pages of manuscript paper contain pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*, a piece completed in 1965. Fixed in its overall form, *String Quartet* includes flexibility in its seventeen interior sections.²⁴⁵ Only the last section is open in form, in which there are eight to ten events for each performer. According to Brown in the “Directions for Performance” for *String Quartet*, in this open-form section “each musician may play any of his events at any time, in any order and at any speed.”²⁴⁶ *String Quartet* was also composed through the “collage-paste-up” process as indicated in Brown’s letter to Cage. Just as *Corroboree* was collaged from pre-compositional material initially composed for two or three pianos, Brown collaged *String Quartet* from pre-compositional material originally intended for the composition of a string quartet.

Unlike the collage process for *Corroboree* and *String Quartet*, in which new, pre-compositional material is cut, arranged, rearranged and pasted, Brown re-employed the already-conceived, pre-compositional material for *String Quartet* as collage material for the third page of *Calder Piece*. This page consists of eight main sections, each marked by a change in instrumentation and percussion parts. For purposes of clarification, I have provided the pages of pre-compositional material in their entirety as they appear in the EBMF Archive in Appendix B, as Figure B- 11 and Figure B- 12. In order to discuss the importance of the inception and interaction of this material from *String Quartet* into *Calder Piece* through the process of collage, I have also divided the pre-compositional manuscripts from Figure B- 11 and Figure B- 12, the most recent, published version of *String Quartet*, and the annotated performance score of *Calder*

²⁴⁵ This delineation of sections corresponds to Brown’s division of the score in increments of time in minutes and seconds. Each section ranges in time from 10” to 2’.

²⁴⁶ Earle Brown, “Program Note,” *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007).

Piece (by Jan Williams) into examples. These examples appear throughout the analysis that follows.

Brown began conceiving *Calder Piece* in 1963, and most likely began composing it by 1964, the same time he was composing *String Quartet* for its premiere performance on October 16, 1965 by the LaSalle String Quartet.²⁴⁷ How then, is it possible to tell if the pre-compositional material on the manuscript paper was conceived initially for *String Quartet* or for the third page of *Calder Piece*? The first answer to this question involves Brown's scoring: each line is scored for the four instruments of a string quartet, including two treble clefs for the violins, an alto clef for the viola, and a bass clef for the cello. Brown even grouped the four parts in their traditional four-line alignment on every manuscript page.

The pre-compositional manuscript also shows evidence that it was initially conceived for *String Quartet* through what it includes: almost all of the material on the page was employed by Brown to compose the entire quartet for strings. Even though all of the musical material on page 3 of *Calder Piece* was collaged from these three pages of pre-compositional manuscript material, not all of the material was used. For instance, the first half of Figure B- 12, Figure 3.2, does not appear on page 3 of *Calder Piece*. Additionally, it is not found anywhere else in the work. In *String Quartet*, however, the four lines of chordal movement are introduced halfway into the piece (See Figure 3.3). The final line of graphic material in Figure B- 12, provided in Figure 3.4, also exemplifies content used only in *String Quartet* and not in *Calder Piece*. This graphic material is collaged throughout the final minutes of *String Quartet*, wherein the form is open and

²⁴⁷ According to the Earle Brown Music Foundation, the work was commissioned by Suedwestfunk Baden-Baden for the "Donauschinger Musiktage" Festival, Germany; first performance: Lasalle Quartet, Oct 16, 1965. Online Archive, "String Quartet," Earle Brown Music Foundation, <http://www.earle-brown.org/works.focus.php?id=31> (accessed January 28, 2012).

the events may be played in any order. The open-form section of the work includes the graphic material as a possible route for the performer.²⁴⁸ Figure 3.5 provides the first violin excerpt from the open-form section in Brown's *String Quartet* in which Figure 3.4 appears.



Figure 3.2 Pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. Chordal material from Figure B-12. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 3.3 Chordal material in the published version of *String Quartet* collaged directly from its pre-compositional material. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.

²⁴⁸ Part of the graphic material also appears in the third system, 45'' in length, in the beginning of the cello part.

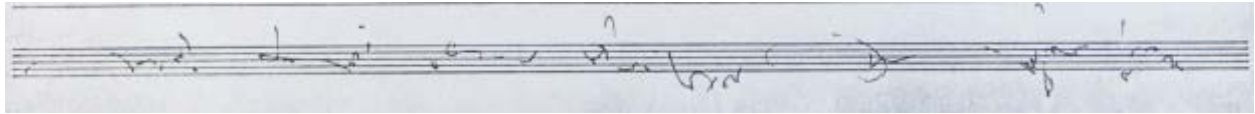


Figure 3.4 Pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. From Figure B-12. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 3.5 First violin part for the last section in the published version of *String Quartet*. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.

Page 3 of *Calder Piece* opens with all four percussionists playing on non-pitched instruments, moving from wood to metal to skin sounds (See Figure 3.6). This system incorporates the first four lines of pre-compositional material for *String Quartet* from Figure B-11, Figure 3.7. In the final version of the score for *String Quartet* (See Figure 3.8) the system appears sixty seconds into the piece as the third section. The string parts incorporate pizzicato notation, to be played, as instructed in the score, “‘below the bridge’ (between the bridge and the tail piece) indicated by an x placed on the line or space corresponding to the open string on the instrument.”²⁴⁹ Although all four percussion parts employ the “x” notation to begin the third

²⁴⁹ Earle Brown, “Program Note,” *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007).

page of *Calder Piece*, in *String Quartet*, Brown omitted the first twelve “x’s” of the pizzicato notation in the beginning of the cello part. Instead, *String Quartet* begins with a portion of the graphic material from Figure 3.4 and initiates the notated “x’s” of the pre-compositional material with the fourth “A” below middle “C.” Although missing from the beginning of *String Quartet*, nine of these twelve notes appear in the last section of the work. Only the first three notes of the cello’s part from the pre-compositional material never appear in the final version of *String Quartet* (See Figure 3.9). This is the only content of pre-compositional material used in *Calder Piece* but not in *String Quartet*.

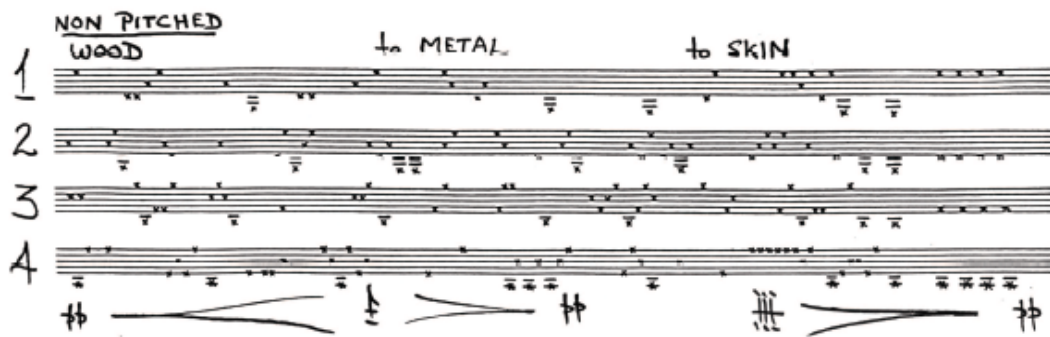


Figure 3.6 First system of page 3 of *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, *Calder Piece*, annotated score, Jan Williams Collection of Annotated Scores, Mus. Arc. 10.1, Item 14. Reprinted with permission.



Figure 3.7 Pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. From Figure B-11. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

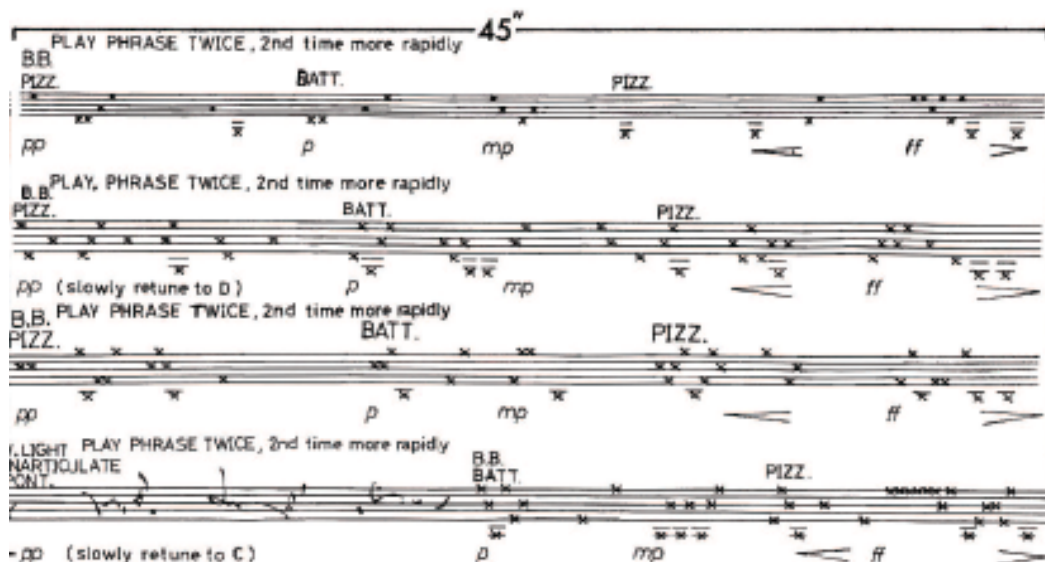


Figure 3.8 Third section in the published version of *String Quartet* collaged directly from its pre-compositional material. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.

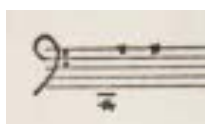


Figure 3.9 First three notes of the cello part in system 1 of Figure B-11. These notes are the only notes of the pre-compositional material not used in *String Quartet*, but employed in *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

For the third page of *Calder Piece*, Brown separated the notated “x”s from their assigned clefs and literally cut the system from the page of pre-compositional material. He then pasted it onto a larger page to create his new score, the “collage sketch.” This page is in a drawer of performance scores for *Calder Piece* in the EBMF Archive.²⁵⁰ Figure B- 13 of Appendix B

²⁵⁰ Because of its larger size, this collaged “sketch” of *Calder Piece* was placed in with past performance scores (marked by performers) for *Calder Piece*, and was not with the pre-compositional material in the drawer marked “*Calder Piece*.”

reproduces the collage sketch. On page three of *Calder Piece* the first section is scored for non-pitched percussion instruments and there are no clefs. The collage sketch contains these four percussion parts, each part number written in hand by Brown: “1,” “2,” “3,” and “4” (See Figure 3.10, from Figure B- 13).



Figure 3.10 First system of the “collage sketch” for *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.



Figure 3.11 Pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. From Figure B-11. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

The next and second system in *Calder Piece* features a duet between Percussion 1 and 3 on marimbas. The instructions in the score direct the performers to play the duet “fast.” This system may be traced to the pre-compositional material in Figure B- 11 in the third system down.

(See the first two lines of Figure 3.11.) In the published version of *String Quartet* these two lines take place approximately 2'20" into the piece as the sixth section. Similar to the tempo marking in *Calder Piece*, in its string instrumentation it is to be played "AFAP," or, "as fast as possible" (See Figure 3.12). In composing *Calder Piece*, Brown disrupted the original four-part scoring of *String Quartet* by cutting the two violin parts from the viola and cello parts created in the pre-compositional material and pasting them onto his collage sketch. However, because the duet incorporates marimbas in *Calder Piece*, Brown did not cut off the treble clefs fashioned originally for a violin duet. The percussion parts "1" and "3" are handwritten next to these clefs on each line (See Figure 3.13).

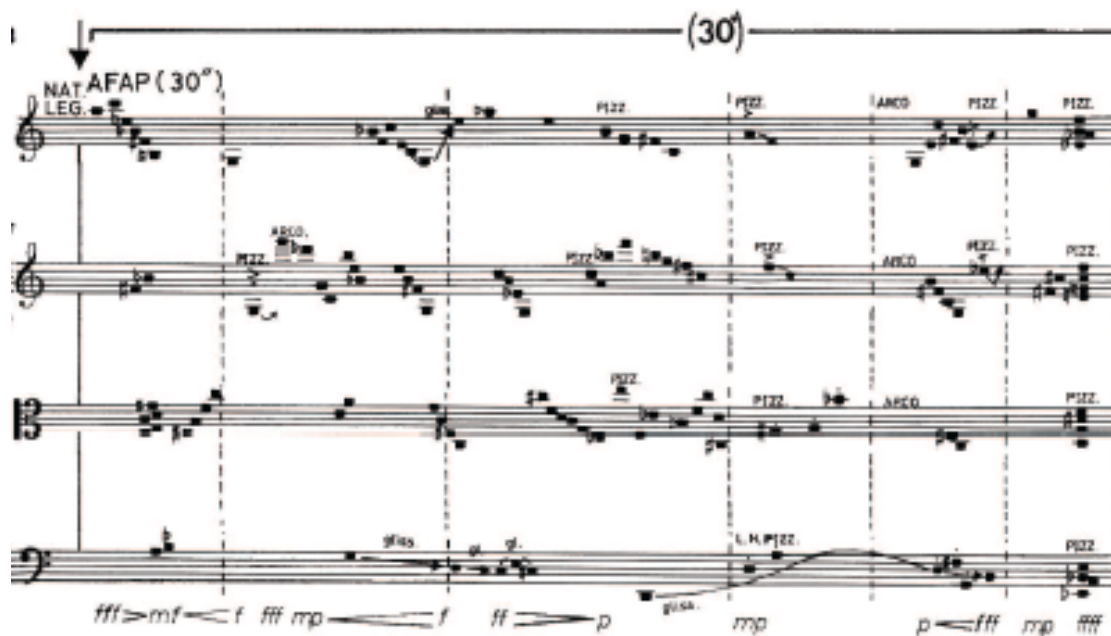


Figure 3.12 Sixth section in the published version of *String Quartet* collaged directly from its pre-compositional material. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.



Figure 3.13 Second system in the “collage-sketch” for *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

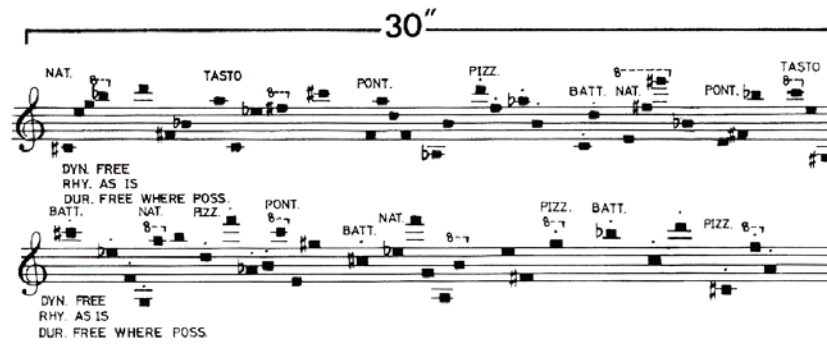


Figure 3.14 Ninth section in the published version of *String Quartet* collaged directly from its pre-compositional material. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.

Brown borrowed the first two violin lines from *String Quartet* for two more duets, one between Percussion 2 and 4 on vibraphones and another between Percussion 1 and 3 on glockenspiels. The former creates the third system on page 3 of *Calder Piece*. In *String Quartet*, the violin lines occur approximately four minutes into the piece as the ninth section, and last for about thirty seconds (See Figure 3.14). These two lines were cut from the second system of pre-compositional material (provided in Figure B- 12 and Figure 3.15) and pasted directly beneath the first system onto the large, collage sketch page (See Figure 3.16). Although Brown cut the violin lines from their treble clefs in the pre-compositional manuscript at the beginning of the two lines on the collage sketch for *Calder Piece*, the treble clefs were rewritten onto the sheet of

paper to the left of the cut out lines. Also handwritten are the percussion parts “2” and “4,” to the left of each clef.



Figure 3.15 Pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. From Figure B-12. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

The act of cutting the treble clefs from the pre-compositional material and then writing them (again) onto the collage sketch for *Calder Piece* further proves that the composer initially conceived the pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. For the string quartet the instrumentation was predetermined to include two violins, viola and cello. In *Calder Piece*, on the other hand, only four percussionists perform; each has around twenty-five instruments at his/her disposal. *String Quartet* provided elemental aural content such as pitch, contour and rhythm, but it did not dictate Brown’s choice of instrumentation in his process of collage.²⁵¹ This is evidenced by Brown’s continued decision throughout page 3 of *Calder Piece* to cut off the clefs of the pre-compositional material in his cut-and-paste method and, if necessary, write them in by hand onto the large, collage-sketch page next to the percussion parts.

²⁵¹ The only system on page three of *Calder Piece* to maintain the original clefs from the pre-compositional material is the second system. See the first two lines of Figure 3.11.



Figure 3.16 Third system in the “collage sketch” for *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

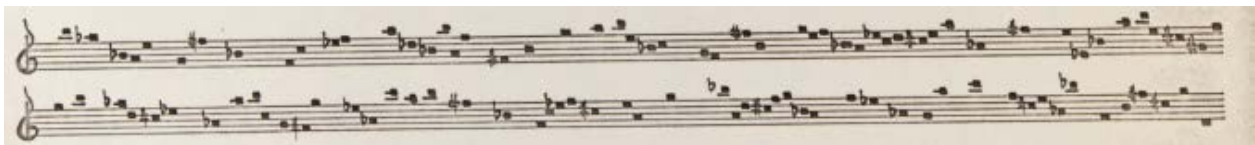


Figure 3.17 Pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. From Figure B-11. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

The other violin duet borrowed from the pre-compositional material for *String Quartet* occurs as the fifth system on the third page of *Calder Piece*. The pre-compositional material provides two lines: the first begins with the note “B” two octaves above middle “C” in the treble clef and ends on “F”; and, the second begins with “G” (also two octaves above middle “C”) in the treble clef and ends on the “D” directly above middle “C” (See Figure 3.17). Brown cut these two lines from the pre-compositional material and pasted them onto the collage sketch (See Figure 3.18). In the *String Quartet*, Brown segmented these lines differently. The first twelve notes of the first violin part (from “B” to “F”) and the first fifteen notes of the second violin part (from “G” to “A-flat”) appear as the eighth section (over three minutes into the piece), which should be played for approximately thirty seconds. The note heads are exaggerated, indicating

that they should be played “arco on the fingerboard” (marked, “TASTO”) and “arco with the wood of the bow” (marked “semi TRATT”) (See Figure 3.19).

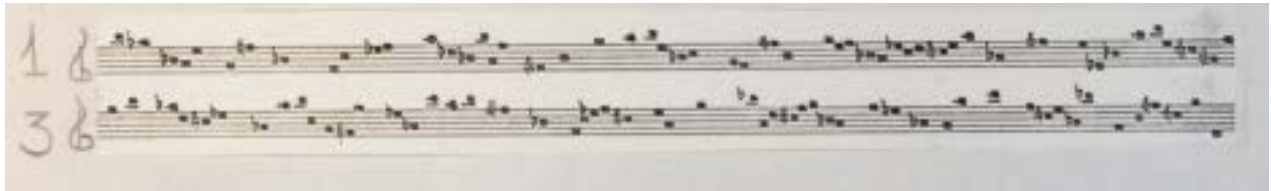


Figure 3.18 Fifth system in the “collage sketch” for *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.



Figure 3.19 Eighth section in the published version of *String Quartet* collaged directly from its pre-compositional material. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Section collaged from the pre-compositional material in Figure 3.17. Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.

The next section of notes collaged in *Calder Piece* occurs in the second and first violin parts, approximately seven minutes into *String Quartet* as the fifteenth section. In this ten-second section, however, the first violin part employs more pitches from the pre-compositional material in Figure 3.17 than does the second violin. In *String Quartet* Brown began the first violin line on the “A” two octaves above middle “C” and ended it on the last note, the “F” two octaves above middle “C.” There are forty pitches in this line. For the second violin part, on the other hand, the

composer started where he began the cut for the first violin line directly under the “A,” with the “C” two octaves above middle “C.” However he cut the line short on the twenty-fourth note, an “A-flat” one octave above middle “C.” In *String Quartet*, the second violin continues by playing a brief arco section (See Figure 3.20). These notated “x’s” have already been played as a pizzicato passage within the first two minutes of *String Quartet*.

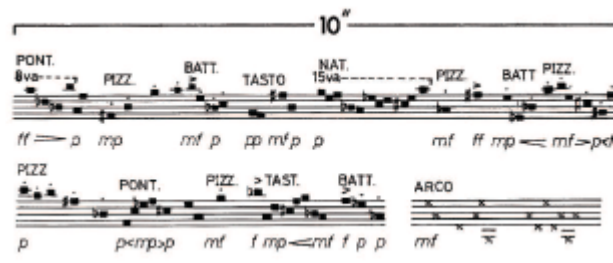


Figure 3.20 Fifteenth section in the published version of *String Quartet* collaged directly from its pre-compositional material. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Section collaged from the pre-compositional material in Figure 3.17. Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.

In the fifth system of *Calder Piece* and in the pre-compositional material, there are still fourteen more pitches after the twenty-fourth note, the “A-flat” of the second violin line. Brown employed these pitches in *String Quartet* as the fifth section, approximately two minutes into the piece (See Figure 3.21). This section features a duet between the second violin and the cello. The violin line begins on the “G” directly above middle “C” and ends on the “D” above middle “C.” Similar to the thirty second phrase between the first and second violin which begins the fifth system used for the third page of *Calder Piece*, the note heads have been exaggerated, this time to indicate “nat. legato”—a “natural bowing position” for legato style playing.

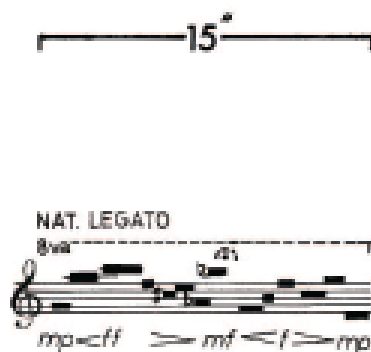


Figure 3.21 Fifth section in the published version of *String Quartet* collaged directly from its pre-compositional material. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Section collaged from the pre-compositional material in Figure 3.17. Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.

The use of the two treble clef lines from the pre-compositional material in their entirety in *Calder Piece* and in fragmentation in *String Quartet* may arouse suspicion about whether or not the pre-compositional material was initially intended for the quartet for strings or one for percussionists. All four systems in Figure B- 11 are grouped together in the scoring of a string quartet; there are two treble clefs (signifying two violins), one alto clef (for viola), and one bass clef (for cello). In the four-part grouping from which Figure 3.17 is separated there is spacing between the note heads: this allows for the option of cutting apart the counterpoint of the four-part quartet in the collage-paste-up process. To emphasize again, in the collage sketch onto which Brown pasted the pieces of pre-compositional material, the original treble clefs were cut off, and two new treble clefs were written directly on the large piece of paper. Even though these two lines were divided and occur separately in *String Quartet*, the pitch material always appears in its original instrumentation—as the first or second violin part. This placement was assigned by Brown in the four-part grouping in the pre-compositional manuscript. The collage of *Calder Piece* is another ordering of the pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. Although the first

four systems of *Calder Piece* occur in the same order as they appear in *String Quartet*, Brown used the third, sixth, ninth and sixteenth sections of *String Quartet* in the first half of *Calder Piece*. As a result, Brown condensed the narrative of events from his quartet for strings in recollaging the pre-compositional material in his quartet for percussion. The fifth system of *Calder Piece* serves as the point wherein Brown played with order through his method of collage.

Following the fifth system on the third page of *Calder Piece*, the first system occurs again. In its repetition as the sixth system, however, the entire section is a retrograde inversion of itself. To create this inversion Brown flipped the cut-out pre-compositional material of *String Quartet* upside down before pasting it onto the large, piece of paper of the collage sketch. (See Figure 3.22 and compare to Figure 3.6 or Figure 3.10.) Although flipped upside down, the sixth system slightly differs in instrumentation. Whereas both systems feature non-pitched percussion instruments, the first progresses from wood to metal to skin sounds. In its flipped repetition, however, the composer does not specify such a progression of timbre. The decision to repeat this section, upside down or not, is remarkable for its relation to *String Quartet*. In the final version of *String Quartet*, Brown decided that the section as a phrase should be played *twice* (See Figure 3.8). In this instance, Brown played with the notion of pitch order in *String Quartet* by retaining its repetition, but reversing in *Calder Piece* what is never played backwards in the quartet for strings. Such a reversal in *Calder Piece* causes us to question our original sense of order in *String Quartet*. The two pieces seem to be in direct dialogue with one another.

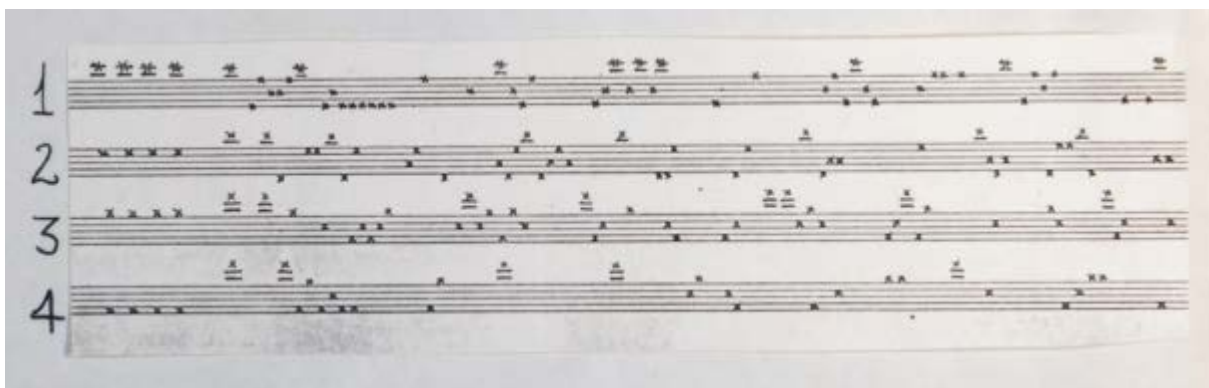


Figure 3.22 Sixth system in the “collage sketch” for *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

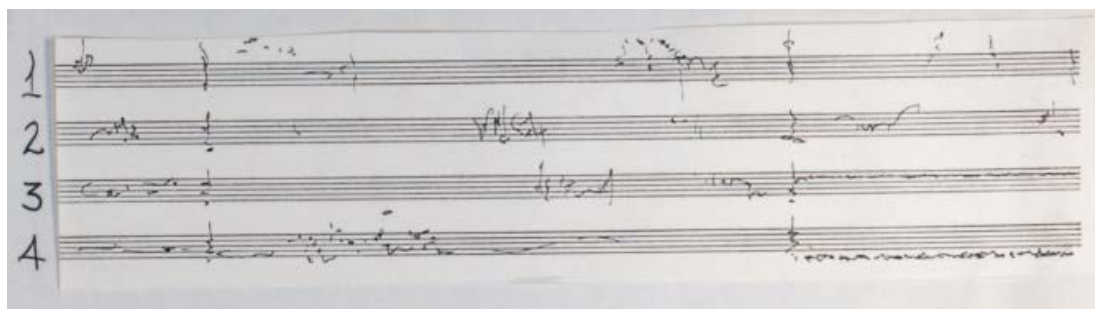


Figure 3.23 Fourth system in the “collage sketch” for *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

Brown repeated this process of pasting the pre-compositional material upside-down onto the collage sketch for the seventh system on the bottom left-hand corner of the page. The material occurs for the first time in *Calder Piece* as the fourth system (See Figure 3.23). For this system of graphic notation, Brown employed pre-compositional material from Figure B- 11 in his score for *Calder Piece* (See Figure 3.24). Similarly to the method employed in the fifth system of *Calder Piece*, what Brown separated in *String Quartet* he collated in the percussion quartet. The first part of the graphic notation occurs as the last part in the sixth section of *String*

Quartet. It is to be played “as fast as possible” in thirty seconds, approximately three minutes into the piece. Brown marked the notation in this published version of *String Quartet* as “inarticulate pont.” which specifies an “extremely nasal sound, near the bridge” that should be played by “not giving full normal sounding value to the notes, a generally fast, random slurring of bow action...”²⁵² (See the boxed excerpt in Figure 3.25).

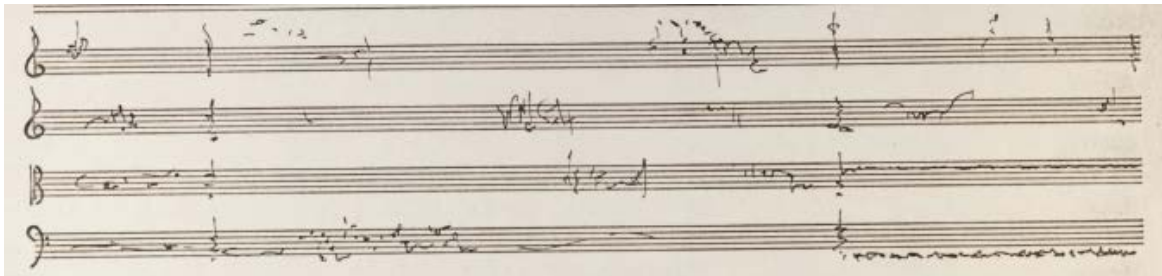


Figure 3.24 Pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. From Figure B-11. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 3.25 Sixth section in the published version of *String Quartet* collaged directly from its pre-compositional material. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.

²⁵² Earle Brown, “Directions for Performance,” *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007).

The remainder of the graphic material emerges in the penultimate section of *String Quartet* before the open form section of the work (See Figure 3.26). For one minute the string players must play “small, transient, inarticulate sounds.” Brown assigned every graphic gesture a bowing or technique in the instructions of the published *String Quartet* score including: pizzicato, natural *arco* bowing, glissando, *sul ponticello*, *col legno battuto*, *col legno tratto*, and *sul tasto*.²⁵³ Even though the sixth and penultimate sections are separated from one another in *String Quartet*, the four-part grouping of the quartet is maintained. Furthermore, their appearance in the final version of *String Quartet* adheres to their original order as assigned in the pre-compositional manuscript.

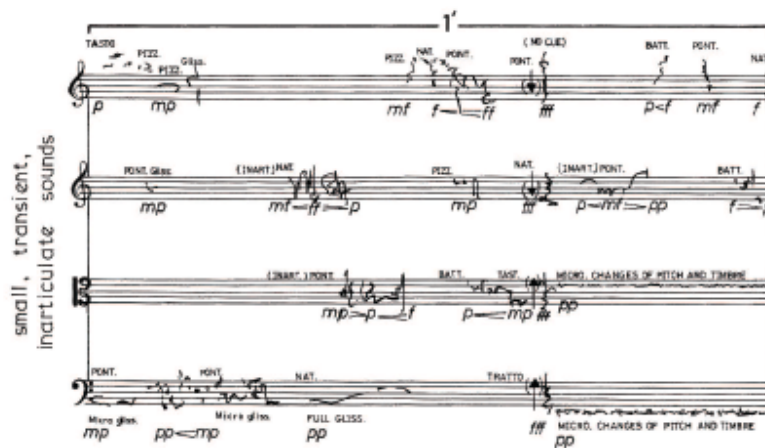


Figure 3.26 Penultimate section in the published version of *String Quartet* collaged directly from its pre-compositional material. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.

²⁵³ *Sul ponticello*: *arco* near bridge: extreme nasal sound; *col legno battuto*: strike the string with the wood of the bow; *col legno tratto*: *arco* with the wood of the bow; *sul tasto*: *arco* on the fingerboard.

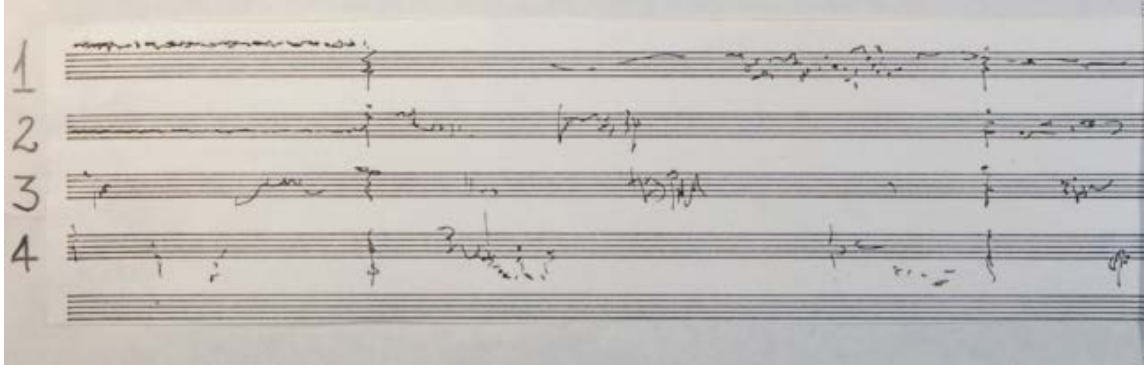


Figure 3.27 Seventh system in the “collage sketch” for *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

Returning to the third page of *Calder Piece*, the seventh system flips the pre-compositional material of its fourth system (Figure 3.23) upside down, as evident in the collage sketch (See Figure 3.27). There is also a slight change of instrumentation and dynamic markings assigned in the performance score.

In the fourth system of *Calder Piece* (Figure 3.28), Brown assigned Percussion 1 the marimba, Percussion 2 the xylophone, Percussion 3 the marimba and Percussion 4 the vibraphone. As the percussionists play the material’s retrograde inversion (Figure 3.29) all of these parts stay the same except for the second percussionist, who is reassigned the vibraphone. Thus approximately halfway through the third page of *Calder Piece*, Brown began playing with the order already established in *Calder Piece* by flipping its pre-compositional material upside down and asking the performers to “play as fast as possible,” skipping over the percussion duets from earlier on the page.



Figure 3.28 Fourth system of page 3 of *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, *Calder Piece*, annotated score, Jan Williams Collection of Annotated Scores, Mus. Arc. 10.1, Item 14, University of Buffalo, State University of New York, NY. Reprinted with permission.

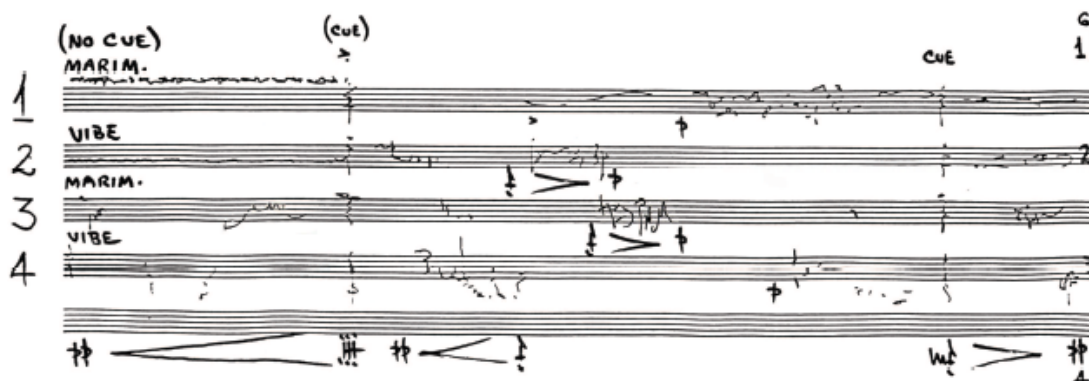


Figure 3.29 Seventh system of page 3 of *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, *Calder Piece*, annotated score, Jan Williams Collection of Annotated Scores, Mus. Arc. 10.1, Item 14, University of Buffalo, State University of New York, NY. Reprinted with permission.

Attached to the end of the upside down material of the seventh section is an addendum for pitched percussion instruments which includes Percussion 1 on glockenspiel, 2 on vibraphone, 3 on glockenspiel, and 4 on vibraphone. Figure 3.30 shows this addendum as cut and pasted onto the collage sketch for *Calder Piece* before the addition of dynamic and instrumental markings. Unlike the music it segues from (Figure 3.27), Brown did not flip the addendum upside down. Figure B- 12 is the page from which the graphic notation was cut. Figure 3.31 provides a close-up of the pre-compositional material of *String Quartet* used for the addendum.

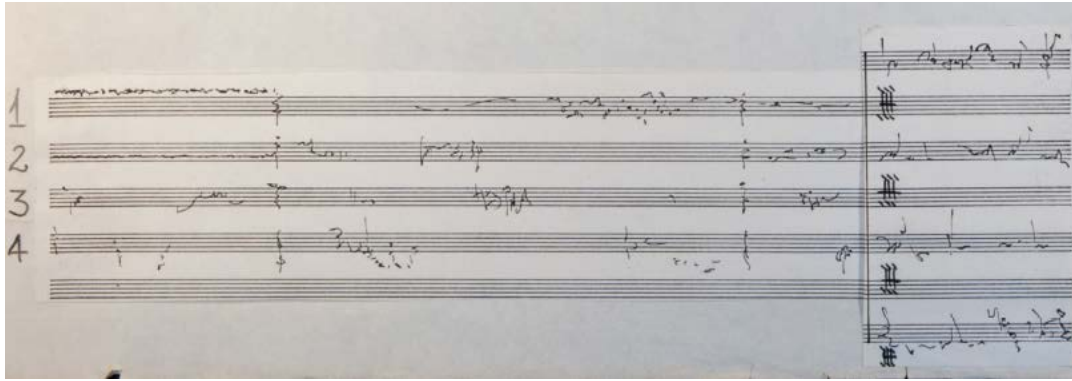


Figure 3.30 Seventh system in the “collage sketch” for *Calder Piece*, including addendum. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.



Figure 3.31 Pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. From Figure B-12. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

In *String Quartet*, this material occurs approximately six minutes into the piece between the thirteenth and fourteenth sections (See Figure 3.32).²⁵⁴ Each succeeding line is slightly offset from the previous one, so that, after the cello enters first, the entrances of the other performers

²⁵⁴ I chose not to indicate this as a separate section because it has no length of time associated with it; Brown only instructs the performers to play is “AFAP,” as fast as possible.

are staggered “as fast as possible,” one after another. This suggests that Brown may have physically separated the four parts from the pre-compositional material during the cut and paste process in creating *String Quartet*. This is further supported by the viola part, for which there is no graphic notation. Instead, it has been replaced by the notated “x’s” cut from the pre-compositional material in the first system of Figure B- 11. (See the boxed figure in Figure 3.33.)

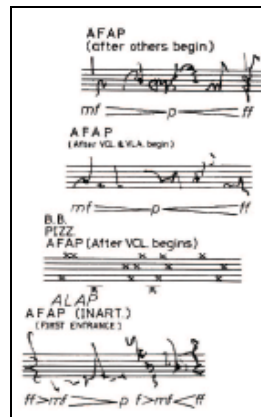


Figure 3.32 Section in between the thirteen and fourteenth sections in the published version of *String Quartet* collaged directly from its pre-compositional material. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.



Figure 3.33 Pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. From Figure B-11. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

In *Calder Piece*, after the “explosive” graphic notation section that ends the seventh system, Percussionists 1 and 3 stop playing and are instructed to go to the mobile to play on it. Only Percussionists 2 and 4 remain to perform a duet on xylophone. In the performance score of *Calder Piece* there are eight gaps in the ledger lines of their duet, an odd occurrence in the context of the seamlessness of the rest of the performance score and a subtle allusion to the collage-paste-up process (See Figure 3.1). Indeed, the two lines were cut from the pre-compositional material for *String Quartet* and taped onto the large piece of paper for the collage sketch, as the last and eighth system on the third page of *Calder Piece*. (See Figure 3.34.)



Figure 3.34 Eighth system in the “collage sketch” for *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

This taped piece of paper provides physical evidence of the cutting process; there are three incisions made to alter the first line, and five made to change the second line. Most of these cuts deleted clefs necessary for the lines of *String Quartet*. The two lines were taken from the second system in Figure B- 12 of the pre-compositional material. The first line is the viola part, written initially in alto clef; the second line is the cello part, written initially in the bass clef (See Figure 3.35). For *Calder Piece* Brown cut the two lines out together (i.e., a rectangle segment).

In the pre-compositional material the viola part changes to the treble clef after the first twelve notes. In *Calder Piece* this missing clef is the first gap, or cut, in the ledger lines. Three more notes occur, and then the alto clef returns in the pre-compositional material. Once again, for *Calder Piece* Brown cut this clef, which resulted in yet another gap. Immediately following the space where the clef once was there is a “D” in the alto clef (in *Calder Piece* no clef is prescribed). Although there is another cut after this pitch, Brown did not remove a clef; instead he eliminated a sharp sign. In the pre-compositional material, this sharp occurs before an “F.”

In the pre-compositional manuscript for *String Quartet*, the cello line also begins in one clef and changes twice. Once again, however, for *Calder Piece*, Brown cut these two clefs out. As illustrated in the pre-compositional material, after the first four notes, the bass clef changes to the treble. In the treble clef, two notes occur an “E-flat” and a “G-flat,” then the bass clef returns. In the next series of cuts to the cello line, two accidentals are removed, both sharps occurring before the pitch “G.” See the boxed pitches in the pre-compositional material in Figure 3.35. The last cut that Brown made was to an entire pitch; he eliminated penultimate note, a “G,” in what would have been the bass clef.



Figure 3.35 Pre-compositional material for *String Quartet*. From Figure B-12. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Reprinted with permission.

Brown maintained the change in clefs in the final version of the *String Quartet* in the viola and cello lines. They occur together approximately four minutes into the piece as the ninth section, thirty seconds in length (See Figure 3.36). The section is marked “dynamic free, rhythm as is, and duration free where possible.” These comments parallel the directions in the final version of the score for *Calder Piece*. Although the dynamics initially indicate *fortississimo* to *mezzo piano*, after the first ten notes, the dynamic marking is “free.” Once more *String Quartet* and *Calder Piece* directly relate to one another; this time through dynamic markings ascribed to similar, cut-and-pasted passages.



Figure 3.36 Ninth section in the published version of *String Quartet* collaged directly from its pre-compositional material. Earle Brown, *String Quartet*, 1965 (Frankfurt, Germany: Litolf/Peters, 2007). Copyright © 2007 by C.F. Peters Corp. Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved.

3.4 CONCLUSION: THE “FEEDBACK CONDITION” OF THE SCORE

Although the pre-compositional material on the manuscript paper was originally written for a string quartet, my analysis shows the ease with which Brown altered *String Quartet* in his collage process. The musical content becomes a composition for percussion quartet, *Calder*

Piece, and Brown places its events in direct dialogue with the order of events in *String Quartet*. The entire third page of *Calder Piece* may be reconstructed with the musical events of the final version of the *String Quartet*.

As I have argued, the pre-compositional materials included in the drawer of pre-compositional materials for *Calder Piece* were originally written for *String Quartet*. Although the order of events for *Calder Piece* could have been composed before *String Quartet* (because the latter was completed (by October 16, 1965 for its premiere) within the timeline of the percussion quartet), the condensation of the *String Quartet*'s overall musical narrative and its play upon this order in *Calder Piece* strongly suggests that *String Quartet* was completed before Brown's completion of *Calder Piece*'s third page. That being said, there is a dialogue between the two pieces as a result of their shared pre-compositional material that demonstrates a "feedback condition" formed by the textual collage process, a condition in which order is always in question.

When listening to a recording of this section of *Calder Piece* some may hear percussive sounds of disorder. Brown's "collage-paste-up process" produces, however, "several orders, several existences and, in addition, a play of wit which unconsciously juggles with them"—the play of musical events adapt to an arrangement of strings or percussion instruments.²⁵⁵ The musical events of *Calder Piece* occur in one order in the performance score. As related to the pre-compositional manuscript material the "existence" of the third page of *Calder Piece* is contingent on the musical events of the *String Quartet*. Brown's method of collaging both follows and evades Bergson's definition of the "willed order." To the performer following the

²⁵⁵ Bergson, *Creative Mind*, 117.

score and the directions for performance for page 3, there is no room for confusion: Brown dictates the sequence of events, pitches, the majority of the instrumentation, and the dynamics. That is...it is willed. However, Brown's order in the score is physically present, an attribute not usual of Bergson's description of the "willed order," the order expected, but disappointingly absent. Instead it is an attribute of the "second order," or the "automatic," "the order that is perceived and thus physically present, even though it is not desired. Just as *Calder Piece* exists in a "feedback condition" with the *String Quartet* as a result of its pre-compositional material, it also exists *in between* these relations of order. Bergson explains in *Creative Evolution* that "we have substituted *will* for the *mechanism* of nature; we have replaced the 'automatic order by a multitude of elementary wills, just to the extent that we imagine the apparition or vanishing of phenomena.'"²⁵⁶ In collaging *Calder Piece* Brown created music that was unexpected, though willed; as a result will is *not* substituted for the mechanism of nature, but coexists with it. The next chapter explores how the mechanism of nature acts in *Calder Piece* through the perceptual collage of the performer.

²⁵⁶ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 225-226.

4.0 *CALDER PIECE* AND THE COMPOSITION OF PERFORMANCE: THE FEEDBACK CONDITION OF MEMORY

Brown's score is carefully notated in all aspects: pitch, rhythm, timings (stop watch timings in the ends of each section and when approaches to the mobile are to commence), and material (metal, wood, etc.). The transition from one instrument group to another is well organized and aurally logical. The space between sections and the arrangement of movements are carefully thought out.²⁵⁷

Joan La Barbara

The score, which is totally notated, allows for the element of openness in that each musician has a different view of the chef d'orchestre, but is thoroughly controlled because time sequences are strictly indicated by a stopwatch, dividing the piece into coherent sections.²⁵⁸

Dore Ashton

These reviews of *Calder Piece* by Aston and La Barbara represent informed perspectives by members of the art and music community which acknowledge and appreciate the control Brown implemented in the collaboration through his conception of form. Neither woman could have been aware of the collage process used to compose *Calder Piece*. By paying careful attention to sound, both notice order to its musical events rather than fixating on disorder; a detailed listening experience absent in those reviews that focused primarily on the role of the mobile in the piece. While "Brown's shaping hand [was] always sensed" by Ashton and La Barbara, their

²⁵⁷ Joan La Barbara, "Earle Brown's Hommage to Alexander Calder," *Musical America* (July 1980): 13.

²⁵⁸ Dore Ashton, "Earle Brown's Continuum," *Arts Magazine*, January 1982.

descriptions address the sensitivity with which the performers interacted with the score as well as the unpredictable motions of the mobile.²⁵⁹ Ashton recounted, “As the mobile gains momentum, the musicians accelerate their movements until they are literally running, producing an extraordinary visual effect as they chase and sound the bobbing red forms.”²⁶⁰ Similarly, La Barbara related the percussionists’ effort to match the pace and rhythms of the mobile, “Some of the percussionists chose to chase the mobile in flight, others stand and wait for certain parts to move toward them, hitting them as the objects pass.”²⁶¹

Despite sensing the composer’s control, they cannot help but observe how “sonic elements inhabit a halfway station *between* the servility of form and the independence of nature.”²⁶² Not only do the percussionists depend on the movements of the mobile at times, but the score includes indeterminate parameters throughout its pages. The entire piece is never fully realized until relations occur between the mobile, the musicians, and the score in performance.

Whereas the previous chapter underscored the “servility of form” composed by Brown through his process of collage in his score for *Calder Piece*, my fourth chapter explores “the general density of *potential*” which inhabits the composition during the moment of performance.²⁶³ As Brown explained in “The Notation and Performance of New Music,” one of two lectures presented by Brown in Darmstadt in 1964, this moment is vital for mobility, “For me, the mobility (or mutability) of the work [not necessarily *Calder Piece*, but many works after 1952, i.e., *Folio* and *TwentyFive Pages*] had to be activated during the performance of the work

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ La Barbara, 13.

²⁶² Earle Brown, “Transformations and Developments of a Radical Aesthetic,” *Current Musicology* 67/68 (Fall 1999): 57. This quote introduced section “3.1 Calder’s Influence” in this dissertation. It is Brown’s interpretation of Jean-Paul Sartre.

²⁶³ Ibid. The quote references back to section “3.1 Calder’s Influence” and Jean-Paul Sartre.

(as in the Mobiles of Calder), and expressed spontaneously and intensely by the performer...”²⁶⁴

Although Brown limited mobility to certain times and spaces in *Calder Piece*, it is only during the moment of performance that it may be activated. This moment is a “condition” for the relations between the mobile, the percussionists, and the score (or the composer, Earle Brown). As Brown highlighted in his other Darmstadt lecture, “Form in New Music,” the condition of mobility allowed in a composition results in: “a performance [that] is composed rather than a composition [that] is performed.”²⁶⁵ This does not take away from the act of composition on the composer’s part. Rather, he or she becomes part of the collaborative process. It is the collaboration between composer and performer that Brown consistently emphasized throughout his career:

...the actual generation of the work seems to me to be an inevitable and important step, a step which not only expands the potential of the environment of relationships (the work) but also the communicative potential, its inherent multiplicity of meaning. Rather than diminish the responsibility of the composer or anyone else, it expands and intensifies all of the dimensions of creating and perceiving. The performing of music is one of the most intimate collaborative involvements that any of the arts permit, and the process and results are the most potentially ambiguous and abstract, which is to say, limitless, multiple, and infinite in effect.²⁶⁶

For Brown, the communicative acts between composer and performer—the creating and perceiving of all dimensions—is “the composition of performance.” Even though the compositions of the 1960s incorporate a fixed macro-form, as Brown states, “I prefer to think of form as the result of activity in relation to a labyrinth of implications rather than as a fixed

²⁶⁴ Earle Brown, “The Notation and Performance of New Music,” *Musical Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (1986): 192. Underline by Brown in text.

²⁶⁵ Earle Brown, “Form in New Music,” in *Source: Music of the Avant-Garde, 1966-1973*, ed. Larry Austin and Douglas Kahn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 27. Original publication: Earle Brown, “Form in der Neuen Music,” *Darmstädter Beiträge zur Neuen Musik* 10 (Mainz: B. Schott’s Söhne (London: Schott & Co., 1965).

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 24.

configuration.”²⁶⁷ Brown’s consideration of form in this manner involved “liberating the form from strict time [such as metered time] and a single configuration.”²⁶⁸ It is in Brown’s “labyrinth of implications” that a *potentiality* of performance emerges. The work” is created through a process which “expands the potential of the environment of relationships” and “also the communicative potential.” Even though the score is pre-determined and fixed in its overall form, as a collaboration with the mobile and the percussionists, *Calder Piece* features mobility inspired by the very sculpture at its center. Brown described this in his lecture, “Form in New Music”:

One cannot diagram response. How can one formalize a cause which is consistent with infinite effect? By realizing that every cause and effect process is based on an infinite labyrinth of feed-back effects, and by trying to balance the input and output factors somewhere between the determinism and anarchy.²⁶⁹

In the creation of a fixed form (cause) without mobility the creation of infinite effect is impossible. When the form involves mobility, as is the case in *Calder Piece*, there is an exchange between perception and creation that results in a continuous and infinite loop. This loop returns sound events that are “never the same twice, but always the same thing,” Brown’s own description of Calder’s mobiles. What have changed are the relations between the actors during the process of performance. This “is the labyrinth of feed-back effects” that endures, and as Brown described, the “very intricate ‘feedback’ condition between the mobile, the score, and the performers” that creates *Calder Piece*.²⁷⁰

To understand the potentiality of this “feedback condition” during the “composition of performance,” I investigate the moment of performance in *Calder Piece* by returning to the score and examining pages in the score that are open in form in Chapter 4. I begin with the final page.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 27.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 24-25.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 27.

²⁷⁰ Brown, “Transformations,” 56.

This page, page 8, is a direct copy of the third page analyzed for its collaged construction in Chapter 3. Unlike page 3, however, the last page of *Calder Piece* should be read differently by the performers as directed by Brown in his “Directions for Performance.” These directions are vital for understanding where and *how* areas of mobility surface. It is through Brown’s own directions that the order arranged in his collaging process is, at times, questioned. As soon as the percussionists are in the moment of performance and the “feedback condition” is enacted between the mobile, the performers *and* the score, order changes.

Vital to understanding the questioning of Brown’s collaged score are the performers. The second part of this chapter introduces their perspective in two ways. For the premiere performance, as well as the performances in Paris immediately thereafter throughout 1967, Diego Masson’s Percussion Quartet of Paris performed *Calder Piece*. Once performances of the collaboration began in the United States by the 1980s, multiple percussion groups had the chance to interact with Calder’s mobile.²⁷¹ Fortunately, after many of these performances, if the percussionists did not want to keep their performance parts, Brown asked if he could keep them. The parts are held at the Earle Brown Music Foundation in a drawer marked as “Calder Piece” and labeled by the composer as “Used Calder Parts” by the composer. Unfortunately, none of the

²⁷¹ The premiere performance in the United States of *Calder Piece* took place on March 9, 1980 at the Fourth Annual Contemporary Music Festival held at CalArts in Valencia, CA. Following the premiere *Calder Piece* was performed: on August 1, 1981 at the Aspen Music Festival; on November 14 and 15, 1981 at the Neuberger Museum on the State University of New York campus in Purchase, NY; on March 25, 1982 at Thwing Auditorium on the Case Western Reserve campus, Cleveland, OH. Also listed on the Earle Brown Music Foundation website is a performance that took place on November 20, 1981 in Washington D.C., however, I have found no reviews of this performance and therefore no details as to where it took place. Online Archive, “Calder Piece,” Earle Brown Music Foundation, <http://www.earle-brown.org/works.focus.php?id=33> (accessed January 28, 2012). A performance took place on April 5, 1992 at the Albright Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY for the North American New Music Festival: it was performed without the mobile.

leaves are labeled by performance, performer or even by a date.²⁷² Despite the lack of categorization, these pages contain markings made by the percussionists that speak to their performance decisions. The sample of parts is large enough to offer patterns which reveal recurring addendums to the score.

Although these parts offer one way in which to traverse an attitude of presence—or how percussionists acted in the moment of performance—in the past, another method is to speak with the performers themselves. To do so, I conducted a telephone interview with a percussionist who performed the piece in 1980 at the CalArts Fourth Annual Contemporary Music Festival: Robert Fernandez.²⁷³ To grasp the levels of freedom Brown allotted to the performers, my questions revolved around their interaction with Calder’s “Chef d’Orchestre” and the score. I compare his answers to these questions to the findings from my survey of the performance parts held at the Earle Brown Music Foundation. This comparison further explains how Brown and/or the performers altered decisions established in the score and in the “Directions for Performance” of *Calder Piece*.

After discussing the performers’ interactions with Brown’s parameters, the third section of Chapter 4 expands the Bergsonian framework I constructed for understanding the composer’s inspiration for order in *Calder Piece* in Chapter 3 *beyond* Brown’s articulated interests in the

²⁷² Furthermore, there are incomplete sets of parts, complete parts for one percussionist, and random pages from both incomplete sets of parts and parts for one percussionist, that have been placed out of order. Brown did not have time to organize all of the materials for *Calder Piece* before his death.

²⁷³ I was unable to contact any members of Diego Masson’s First Percussion Quartet of Paris. The percussionists who performed at the Neuberger Museum in 1981 have never been listed. In the spring of 2011, I tried contacting two percussionists who performed at Case Western in 1982: John Kinzie and Ray Breakall. Neither returned my email messages. I also tried contacting the two percussionists who performed at the CalArts Contemporary Music Festival in 1980: Arthur Jarvinen and John Bergamo. Arthur Jarvinen (member of the Antenna Repairmen percussion trio and composer of experimental music) passed away in October 2010. I am grateful to his wife, Lynn Jarvinen, who provided contact information for the other two members of the Antenna Repairmen who performed *Calder Piece* with him in 1980, Robert Fernandez and M.B. Gordy. I interviewed both Fernandez and Gordy.

philosopher's writings. Although Brown made no direct reference to Bergson's book, *Matter and Memory*, during his lifetime, this foundation treatise helps illuminate Brown's notion of "feedback" as "intricate feedback condition" that also exists within the performer's mind, or at "the intersection of mind and matter," Bergson's succinct definition of *memory*.²⁷⁴ The percussionist is often instructed by Brown to interact with the mobile, the object of the performance, by striking it directly and "reading" the mobile in relation to the score. Although the instructions for reading the mobile are described in the beginning of this chapter, their meaning for the performer is discussed here in relation to Bergson's philosophical trajectory of the movement from memory to "memory-image" to perception in the present, or the presence of performance.²⁷⁵ It is through Bergson's philosophy of memory that I demonstrate how time and order in the score of *Calder Piece* intersect with spaces of perception and recollection in the actions of the performers. This section unveils the complexity in Brown's description of *Calder Piece* as "a very intricate 'feedback' condition between the mobile, the score, and the performers." Externally, the feedback condition exists as relations between the actors performing *Calder Piece* as articulated clearly by Brown in his description of the collaboration. In Chapter 3 this surface was unearthed by way of the demonstration of the intricacy of the composer's "collage-paste-up process" and the feedback condition between *Calder Piece* and Brown's *String Quartet*. The last section in Chapter 4 divulges yet another manifestation of feedback—relations that exist within the performer. As a result the "feedback condition" of *Calder Piece* becomes three-fold. In the relations between the actors in performance, the collage of the score, *and* in the mind of the performer, the balance of "determinism and anarchy" offered in *Calder Piece* exists

²⁷⁴ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (Edinburgh, United Kingdom: Neill and Co., 1962), xvi.

²⁷⁵ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 170-179.

in the past, the present, and presence. Feedback conditions enact a Bergsonian play of order and disorder as the percussionist partakes in his or her own perceptual collage.

4.1 OPEN FORM AS COLLAGE IN THE FINAL PAGE OF CALDER PIECE

The musical content of the eighth and final page of *Calder Piece* is a copy of the third page discussed in Chapter 4. Although the page mirrors the musical content of the third page, Brown's instructions in his "Directions for Performance" for page 8 are entirely different than those regarding page 3. To begin page 3, Brown stated:

Ensembles as indicated: non-pitched and pitched instruments. Each system is read horizontally across the whole page.

For page 8, on the other hand, Brown instructed performers to:

"Read" the MOBILE as on pages 2 and 5, SOLOISTICALLY. Play any of the written figurations (do not improvise), maintaining the given timbre and dynamics but do not synchronize as on page 3. Free solo-polyphony of any figures on the page.²⁷⁶

Pages formed by a "reading" of the mobile are open in form: they are the "mobile interior structures," of the closed macro-form of *Calder Piece*. To "read" the mobile, as explained in the instructions for the second page, means: "To visualize a configuration of the 'petals' as being superimposed over the field of pitch figurations of page 2 [and page 8] and play the figurations that the petals would cover at that instant, in any order you wish."²⁷⁷ Brown portrayed this

²⁷⁶ Earle Brown, "Directions for Performance," *Calder Piece*, 1963-1966 (New York: C.F. Peters, 2011). All caps in published score.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

description with an illustration of a portion of the mobile superimposed onto the second page of *Calder Piece* in his ‘Directions for Performance.’ The drawing of the mobile went through a series of revisions. Not only did the illustration become more “fine tuned” in the performance score, but as Brown tailored the mobile diagram, his directions in prose became clearer.

Brown’s mobile drawing initially appeared on the first page in Brown’s manuscript, first draft for his “Directions for Performance.” After the written directions which explained how to “read” the mobile, the composer drew half of a Calder mobile sketched onto a rectangle labeled in the upper right hand corner as “Pg 2.” (See the second-half of Figure B- 14 in Appendix B.) This half-mobile was sketched from the illustration of the entire mobile, a drawing by Brown himself, provided on the first page of the *Calder Piece* score (See Figure B- 15 in Appendix B). On the circular “petals” of the mobile there are “x’s,” which signify, “play the figures in those areas in any sequence.”²⁷⁸ In a second draft of his Calder mobile image sketched for page 2 in the “Directions for Performance” the drawing of the mobile remains the same (see Figure B- 16 in Appendix B). As a substitute to the blank rectangle merely labeled “Pg 2” in his first draft of the image, Brown actually copied the score of the second page and wrote, “PLAY notes in any order.”²⁷⁹ By the next version, the third draft of the mobile image, reproduced in Figure B- 17, Brown eliminated the stand of the mobile; however, the number of petals remains the same. Underneath the drawing the directions change to specify *which* notes are to be played in any

²⁷⁸ Earle Brown, first draft of the mobile image sketched for page 2 in the “Directions for Performance” for *Calder Piece*, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

²⁷⁹ Earle Brown, second draft of the mobile image sketched for page 2 in the “Directions for Performance” for *Calder Piece*, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

order: “Play notes within (covered by) ‘petals’ of mobile groups in any order.”²⁸⁰ In the final version of the illustration, the drawing is the most streamlined; Brown incorporated only six petals. In addition, he clarified his written directions once more; the notes within the petals are not to be “played in any order.” Instead as the directions indicate, “Play notes within ‘petal’ shapes of MOBILE. Maintain rhythm and note seq. but groups any order” (See Figure B- 18 in Appendix B).²⁸¹

Despite the revision of this rhetoric in an effort to increase composer control, by including a reading of the petals on the mobile, Brown offered the performer freedoms in the composition of performance. The incorporation of a reading of the mobile underscores the importance of collaborating with the percussionists, a balance of “form and the independence of nature” through collage, both textual and perceptual.

4.2 COLLABORATING WITH THE PERFORMER

4.2.1 Reading the Mobile

During a performance of *Calder Piece*, pages that incorporate a reading of the mobile are not labeled as improvisatory. However, by leaving the visualization and superimposition of the mobile to the discretion of the percussionists, Brown entrusted these performers, in part, as

²⁸⁰ Earle Brown, third draft of the mobile image sketched for page 2 in the “Directions for Performance” for *Calder Piece*, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Underline by Brown.

²⁸¹ Earle Brown, “Directions for Performance,” *Calder Piece*, 1963-1966 (New York: C.F. Peters, 2011). . Capitalization by Brown.

composers. Together they collaborated to create a “performance [that] is composed rather than a composition [that] is performed.”²⁸² As a result, to understand *Calder Piece* as a composition is to investigate it as a performance: this cannot be done without the perspective of the percussionists.

Not many percussion quartets have performed *Calder Piece*. Diego Masson’s “Quatuor a Percussion de Paris” premiered the collaboration during the 1960s in France; however, the first American performance was not until March 9, 1980 on the final day of the Contemporary Music Festival held at CalArts in Valencia. Four percussionists came together for the American premiere: John Bergamo and the Antenna Repairmen, which included members Robert Fernandez, Arthur Jarvinen, and M.B. Gordy. Robert Fernandez explained how work on *Calder Piece* began:

You know the Repairmen were a trio already and John was our teacher, so we were already a likely candidate. So the three of us had played together for several years already and we were very in tune to each other’s playing and, of course, we knew John’s playing. So it seemed a likely choice that the three of us, the four of us would play. We knew Earle from *Available Forms* and him conducting. I loved playing those pieces. They were really hard. When you take graphic notation seriously and you want to make music out of it you gotta practice it. It’s not just, you know, you go, (RF makes scalar sound). It’s the Isaac Newton what goes up must come down. You gotta really play and make choices. Sometimes I would write stuff in my score. Like I’m looking at some of these other ones...Page 3...you know, I wrote to play this on four instruments and do this here and play this muted. You know we really took the piece seriously. You have to practice that kind of music. When there’s no pulse—you know, and it’s all seconds, then you gotta figure out how to gauge the notes and the spaces and all that stuff, and it’s very challenging. You have to put on part of your composer-hat and say, “He’s giving me this, these boundaries but then how do I control these other boundaries, and it’s my decision.”²⁸³

²⁸² Earle Brown, “Form in New Music,” 27.

²⁸³ Robert Fernandez, interview by author, May 2, 2011, [0:11:56].

It is no surprise that Brown entrusted these four percussionists to “hear each other and play within a certain amount of time” in *Calder Piece*.²⁸⁴ In Fernandez’s description of how the group came together for the CalArts premiere, he also indicated their seriousness in playing the notation and instructions which afforded them with more choices during the moment of performance. They had to make decisions. Other discussions in my interview with Fernandez in tandem with perspectives from the performance scores in the EBMF archive illuminate this process and demonstrate how “reading the mobile,” although a flexible aspect in itself, may have deviated from the score and “Directions for Performance” of *Calder Piece* described thus far.

4.3 THE PERFORMER’S PERSPECTIVE

4.3.1 Page 2 of *Calder Piece*

Of the eight-pages that comprise Brown’s *Calder Piece*, three include a “reading” of Calder’s mobile. Despite the collaboration built into the first page of *Calder Piece*, as a result of graphic notation, the first page that involves a “reading” that allows for more control on the part of the performer is page two. In addition to explaining how to “read” the mobile for this page in his “Directions for Performance,” Brown also included instructions on the bottom of the score on page 2: “‘READ’ moving mobile only on pitched instruments.”²⁸⁵ While reviewing each page of

²⁸⁴ According to Fernandez, Brown was also present for most of the rehearsals for the Cal Arts premiere.

²⁸⁵ Earle Brown, *Calder Piece*, page 2, annotated score, Jan Williams Collection of Annotated Scores, Mus. Arc. 10.1, Item 14.

his personal performance score, Fernandez described a mode of “reading” the mobile that differed from Brown’s instructions in his recollection of the second page:

RF: Right, I think we just sort of, you know, whatever we were close to we would interpret that figure on those petals. I don’t remember...If you’re close to four petals and you go “bee-bah-boo-bop” and play that front one figure, or would you try to play that on, you know if it was in front of one petal would you play it on four different areas of that petal: the corner, maybe towards the high end. In other words if you put that petal, and those notes in front of the petal where is it going to situate itself? Towards the high end of the petal versus the second phrase it more encompasses the whole clef. Is it more towards the center of the petal? I think we were thinking much more gestural because we couldn’t get those pitches. The thing [the mobile] was not, like, that resonant. It becomes a gesture. It becomes less about the pitches and more about the gesture; and the relationship of the high to low.²⁸⁶

Instead of playing on pitched instruments, as stated in the score, Fernandez’s description portrays a “reading” of the mobile during the CalArts performance in which the percussionists superimposed the pitches directly on Calder’s mobile. According to Fernandez, because the petals were not pitched, playing on the mobile changed Brown’s written notation into a gestural act in which high to low relationships superseded the achievement of exact pitches. This not only goes against what is written at the bottom of page 2 in the performance score of *Calder Piece*, but it also reinforces the possibility that Brown had not written his “Directions for Performance” until after 1980, as it began to be performed by more American percussion ensembles. Another possibility is that Brown may have had these “Directions” written, but he did not provide the instructions to John Bergamo and the Antenna Repairmen. Fernandez did not have the page with his performance score.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ Robert Fernandez, interview by author, May 2, 2011, [0:40:25].

²⁸⁷ I interviewed another percussionist who premiered *Calder Piece* at CalArts in 1980, M.B. Gordy, but have not included his discussion in my dissertation discussion. He did not remember having it either. Gordy did not have his performance part for *Calder Piece* in his possession.

Even though the American premiere of *Calder Piece* at CalArts featured a unique method of “reading” the petals that involved direct interaction with the mobile, the performance scores of other percussionists demonstrate that not all ensembles performed the second page in this way. For instance, in a complete part for Percussion 2, the second page is labeled in orange marker with the markings “xylo” in the upper left-hand corner and “2” in the middle of the page (See Figure B- 19 in Appendix B).²⁸⁸ The markings of this performance score differ greatly from that described by Fernandez in his performance part for the CalArts performance. Instead of playing on the mobile, this performance score demonstrates a “reading” of a mobile that included the pitched instruments and the superimposition of petals onto the page of pitches. In addition, the percussionist seems to have been drawing the reading of the mobile from material across the entire page; above certain note-heads, he or she has penciled in “RR” or “LL,” to indicate specific hand sequences. Even though Fernandez did not describe any such markings in his part, they reinforce his claim that the music had to be practiced extensively before a performance—no matter the ensemble.

Another example of page 2 is from a Percussion 3 part (See Figure B- 20 in Appendix B).²⁸⁹ Once again there are hardly any markings. The performer merely wrote “leave spaces” next to Brown’s instructions to “‘read’ the moving mobile,” and “tom will cue wood” in the bottom right-hand corner of the page. The latter of the two comments implies the cue which begins page 3 and the first system of “non-pitched wood” sounds. There are no markings around

²⁸⁸ The “2” signifies the page and *not* the assignment of Percussion 2 to this performer. This page is from a complete part for Percussion 2. The handwriting throughout the eight pages matches, as well as the use of orange marker. On the first page of this complete part, the percussionist circled “2” in the upper right-hand corner of the page.

²⁸⁹ Although there are no markings on page 2 to indicate it as Percussion 3, it belongs to a complete set of parts for one percussionist—a performer assigned the third part. The handwriting throughout the eight pages matches, as well as the use of red marker. On the first page of this complete part, the percussionist circled “3” in the upper right-hand corner of the page.

the note heads. By comparing this part to the Percussion 2 part, described above, it may be surmised that: 1.) In this specific performance part, he or she played marimba, the pitched percussion instrument assigned to Percussion 3 throughout) and, 2.) Reading the mobile involved the superimposition of petals onto the page of pitches. Playing one instrument, assigned by Brown for the entire second page, and the superimposition of petals parallel the qualities of the Percussion 2 part described above.

One page that differs from those described thus far for page 2 is from an incomplete set of parts and an incomplete part. At the top of the page, the percussionist wrote in pencil, “order: 1, 2, 3, 4, start soft increase dynamics” (See Figure B- 21 in Appendix B). In the third and fourth lines, five groups of notes are circled in pencil. Instead of “reading” the mobile by superimposing a memorized impression of a petal anywhere on the page (as in the previously discussed performance parts), it appears as if this percussionist predetermined which groups of notes were going to be played at the time of a performance. In addition, the direction penciled in at the top of the page points to the likely conclusion that Percussion 1 was assigned the first two lines, Percussion 2, the next 2 lines, Percussion 3, lines five and six, and Percussion 4 the last two lines. As a result, this is the part for Percussion 2. Dividing the page in such a manner demonstrates a decision made by the ensemble or for the ensemble by Brown.

4.3.2 Page 5 of *Calder Piece*

This decision to focus on certain lines of page 2 was a strategy used by John Bergamo and the Antenna Repairmen for the CalArts premiere on page 5, another page which features a reading of the mobile. Page 5 of the score for *Calder Piece* is a copy of page 2. However in the most recent

adaptation of the score the bottoms of these pages differ. Page 5 does not include the instruction “‘READ’ moving mobile only on pitched instruments.”²⁹⁰ Alternatively it states, “For Pg. 5— All begin on metal (glock and vibes); Then, all on wood (xylo and marimba).”²⁹¹ Some performance scores do not have this differentiation in instructions between pages 2 and 5. Instead, page 5 is a direct copy of page 2, and both pages incorporate the direction to “read” the mobile directly in the score. This was the case for the performers in the CalArts ensemble. As Fernandez explained, the reading of the fifth page differed greatly from their reading of the second page. Whereas they played directly *on* the mobile for page 2, they played on pitched percussion instruments for page 5. This difference also meant a change in their approach to the page. Fernandez’s notes in his performance score elucidate this change:

...I’ve got, on the second system [of page 5], where’s there’s two bass clefs. I have that in brackets. I’m trying to remember why that was... Yeah, that I’m not sure. Unless I just said...made the decision, I’m going to play these two systems, and I’m going to go from left all the way to right, and not worry about the two systems on top or the four systems below, but concentrate on just those two. And then maybe even Earle suggested that, I’m not sure, but I have that kind of highlighted and focused on those two systems specifically. I wonder if we decided...does everybody have the same page, all four of us?²⁹²

When I answered this questioned positively, Fernandez became even more confident of the quadruple division:

...Maybe somebody said: “Hey you take the first two, I’ll take the next two, you take the next two, you take the bottom two.” Just from the fact I get specific about highlighting stuff. I put railroad tracks on the corners of those two bass clef systems all the way through to the other side: so those were mine. I said, so that’s what I’m going to concentrate on. We may have done that. And you know, maybe it was Earle’s suggestion,

²⁹⁰ Earle Brown, *Calder Piece*, page 2, annotated score, Jan Williams Collection of Annotated Scores, Mus. Arc. 10.1, Item 14.

²⁹¹ Earle Brown, *Calder Piece*, page 5, annotated score, Jan Williams Collection of Annotated Scores, Mus. Arc. 10.1, Item 14.

²⁹² Robert Fernandez, interview by author, May 2, 2011, [1:01:25].

maybe he said, “oh that’s a good idea.” If he would have said no, we would have said, “okay, that’s fine.”²⁹³

In other performance scores, page 5 does not feature any four-part divisions. There are no markings around or to the note-heads. Referring back to the Percussion 2 and 3 parts held in the drawer of performance scores at the EBMF (highlighted in my discussion of page 2), both incorporate a change in instrumentation for page 5. The Percussion 3 part includes the remark “on bells” towards the upper, left-hand corner and in the lower, left-hand corner of the page (See Figure B- 22 in Appendix B). On the second half of the page in the lower, right-hand corner there is another note, “Begin on Glock then go to Marimba.” A similar marking that indicates a change of instrumentation during a performance of page 5 was written in marker in the upper, left-hand corner and on the middle of the page of the Percussion 2 part. It states “vibes to xylo” (See Figure B- 23 in Appendix B). Unlike the consistency of instrumentation featured on page 2, page 5 appears to have included a change in pitched instrumentation in one or more performances. Even though a second page is included for this Percussion 2 part (a complete part, with all eight pages), on the fifth page, the percussionist has also written in large handwriting “pg 2 & 5.” Was the initial page 2, which featured no change in instrumentation, used during a performance? Or, for one reason or another, was this page which includes the change used twice? What can be said with certainty is that these parts demonstrate a reading of the mobile that draws from material across the entire page. No pitches or groups of pitches are circled, thus signifying a pre-determined way of reading the page.²⁹⁴

²⁹³ Ibid, [1:03:05].

²⁹⁴ This is similar to the readings of page 2 for both of these performance parts (discussed in “Page Two of *Calder Piece*”) wherein no pitches or groups of pitches were circled by the performers.

4.3.3 Page 8 of *Calder Piece*

The final page comprised of a “reading” of the mobile is also the final page in the score, page 8. Like the photocopying of page 2 to produce page 5, Brown copied page 3 to create the final page. Thus, page 8 was also generated by the collage-paste-up process in feedback with Brown’s *String Quartet*. By having the performers “read” the mobile during the moment of performance, the percussionists also created sound by collaging, a method dependent on the movements and positions of the mobile.

In the CalArts performance, Brown inserted an extra page into the performance. As a result, the eighth page was a copy of the fourth page (not examined in this study), and the ninth page was a copy of the third page (the page examined in feedback with the *String Quartet*). In regards to the added ninth page, Fernandez stated that for, “page 9, I have ‘open form,’ and then it says, ‘independently go to any figure.’”²⁹⁵ Due to the uniqueness of having nine pages, I asked Fernandez to explain the final two pages of his version of *Calder Piece*, as compared to the pages from which they were copied. He said:

Page 3 had much more detail. I had dynamics and I had these...This one [Fernandez’s page 9] had, just says “open form” and “independently go to any figure.”...For me page 4 and 8 are the same. It looks like copies. We used all these pages cause there’s writing on all of them. So, like I said the last page says “open form,” “independently go to any figure,” but I don’t have much written as far as that. I guess because by that time, we already had-- this page was the same as the other one. And we had a lot of these gestures already memorized. So we didn’t have to look up at the music. We kind of knew, okay I’m number 1, it’s the same recurring material. And then maybe Earle said, if it’s the same material, maybe a little interpretation, different interpretation. And I put “open form” which means, the figures are much more, ah there’s not maybe as much synchronization. I’m not sure, I’m not sure. I see things lining up still, so we probably did

²⁹⁵ Robert Fernandez, interview by author, May 2, 2011, [1:16:50].

that. Maybe it's more spacious. I'm not sure. I have very little marked on this. Even on the backs of the pages...nothing.²⁹⁶

Fernandez's description of a performance score devoid of markings on his ninth page mirrors the lack of markings on page 8 in the drawer of performance scores at the EBMF. For example, in the Percussion 3 part described earlier, the only markings made by the percussionist on the eighth page of his or her score are in the bottom, right-hand corner. In this part, the eighth page is a direct copy of page 3. In the right-hand corner of page 3 are instructions to go to the mobile. Functioning as page 8, however, these instructions—"[Perc. 1 to mobile (begin before this ends)]," "[Mobile struck gong-like, med. Soft mall]," and "[Perc. 3 to mobile (10" after this ends)]" have been crossed out. At the top of the page, "8" has been written in pencil and red marker. No other markings have been made (See Figure B- 24 in Appendix B).

By exploring those pages which incorporate a reading of the mobile—pages 2, 5, and 8—the role of the performer emerges; percussionists made decisions based on Brown's score, the movements of the mobile, as well as their own intuition. It also demonstrates the ease with which Brown altered the score, or allowed performers to alter the score, to suit or meet the capabilities of individual percussionists. Fernandez's explanation of the CalArts performance of the last page of *Calder Piece* draws attention to the freedoms Brown felt comfortable giving to performers. With such freedom, however, arrives yet another condition of "feedback" which exists in the mind of performer, that of memory.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, [1:18:30].

4.4 BERGSON'S RETURN: THE MATTER OF MEMORY IN CALDER PIECE

The performer's experience with *Calder Piece*, as shown in my interview with Fernandez and through the performance parts held at the EBMF, highlights two main courses of direction for performance: first, a predetermined route made by the performers and/or Brown in conjunction with the score *before* its intersection with the mobile and second, a route in which the percussionist's decisions are partly dependent on the movements of the mobile during the moment of performance. In the latter case, a "reading" of the mobile has been woven into the collaged score. Although the score and the "Directions for Performance" act as a guiding force, in the second route, the sounds that may have automatically been inscribed in a performance led entirely by the written authority of the composer cannot be realized until the performers have combined their knowledge of the score with the motion of the mobile during a performance. This is the "very intricate 'feedback' condition between the mobile, the score, and the performers" with which Brown summarized the piece in 1999.

The process of "reading" during performances of *Calder Piece* is a collaborative effort which involves the three actors, mobile, score and performers. However, a successful realization relies on the percussionist and his/her ability to perceive a petal of the mobile, superimpose this image onto a section of the score, and then play the pitches encircled by the imagined outlines of the petal in the order composed by Brown. *Calder Piece* is as much a collaged score as it is a collaged performance pieced together by perception, memory and the actions of a percussionist's body. The next section explores the intricacy of this collaboration for the individual performer through the perspective of the philosopher with whom Brown felt a kinship: Henri Bergson. As

explored in the previous chapter, Brown wrote about and often referred to ideas central to Bergson's quote, "disorder is merely the order you are not looking for." In collaging the score for *Calder Piece*, Brown demonstrated order in a feedback condition with that of his *String Quartet*, which vacillates between the "willed" and the "automatic" sides of Bergson's binary conception of order.

To understand both collage and order during the process of performance, I approach the mental and physical actions of the performer through Bergson's philosophy of memory in *Matter and Memory* and as furthered by Gilles Deleuze in *Bergsonism*. From *Matter and Memory*, five main areas of Bergson's study of memory are pertinent to the role of the performer in "composing" *Calder Piece*: the "two forms of memory," "memory-image," perception, recollection, and the body. As in this text in performances of *Calder Piece* it begins with the "image."

4.4.1 *Matter and Memory*

4.4.1.1 Image/Object

In Bergson's introduction to *Matter and Memory*, image is initially defined through an explanation of matter. He states:

Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of 'images.' And by 'image' we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing*—an existence placed half-way between the 'thing' and the 'representation.'²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, xi-xii. Italics by Bergson.

The existence of the image *between* a thing, or that which may be objectified, and a representation, or that which depends on the mind, acknowledges the elusiveness of the image's location. Is it in the object itself or in the mind? If, "the object exists in itself, and, on the other hand, the object is, in itself pictorial, as we perceive it," the image also calls into question the formation of the object. As Bergson summarizes, "...image it [the object] is, but a self-existing image."²⁹⁸ Just as the image survives between object and representation, the object wavers between a self-existing image and an image that relies on the body to perceive it. How different is the object from the image? This question behind Bergson's exploration in *Matter and Memory* plays out in performances of *Calder Piece*. In this collaboration, there are two objects perceived by the performer which influence his or her decisions: the score and the mobile. During the performance each object also takes on the role of the image through the performer's body; "...body, then, acts like an image which reflects others, and, in so doing, analyses them along lines corresponding to the different actions which it can exercise upon them."²⁹⁹ This analysis of image, however, depends on the role of memory.

4.4.1.2 Memory

On one level in *Calder Piece*, memory functions in two ways. First, it is a process by which the percussionists learn the score. The gestures constructed by Brown must be practiced. By rehearsing these gestures repeatedly, the recurrence of material may have also resulted in their eventual memorization. This was the case for the percussionists of the CalArts ensemble, as explained by Fernandez in my earlier investigation of the performers' roles in realizing pages of

²⁹⁸ Ibid, xii.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, 46.

the score performed by “reading” the mobile.³⁰⁰ Although the last page is open in form, because it reproduces the contents of the collaged, third page, I asked Fernandez if it was possible to resist the sensory-motor relationships that he had built: 1.) after having played the third page during a performance and, 2.) after having practiced both pages in rehearsal. In his response, he confirmed the possibility of performing both pages similarly but also offered ways in which the performers consciously altered the performance of the final page in order to sound different than what had been played for page 3:

I’m sure that some of the phrases that crept up, you know, because they were hard wired...and I practiced that way. But we could have internalized a different speed, and that’s going to change the effect. So, if somebody conducts something at a quarter note equals eighty, and somebody conducts something at a quarter note equals a hundred and ten. You know, those gestures, even though they are the same, are going to feel different because of the speed. That seems like a no brainer, but it could have been that we just started on, at a different feel...³⁰¹

In this description, Fernandez provided an explanation in which the *order* of the gestures in the duplicate page may or may not have been the same. What could have changed is the tempo. He continued:

And so I thought, maybe we picked four different sounds, or maybe we just picked four sounds that were from the areas. So mine is still G, D, A, and E. So maybe I picked from whatever family of instruments, you know I picked one from there, one from there, one from there, one from there and then sort of went with that, maintaining again the lo-high relationship. I mean, maybe that’s what we did, or maybe we just picked really four different sounds and stayed to those, just like we did on the other page. Maybe we picked four sounds and stayed with those.

I’m not sure, I’m not sure. I don’t see the detail on that. Maybe it was much more open in that respect. And we really kept the, again the high to lo relationship and the spatial relationship, but maybe we were much more liberal with the actual notes. So, it’s still, I maintain the two parameters of high to lo and spatial, but maybe, what was actually played was different notes. I’m not sure. From my systems, for that 1, 2, 3, 4 it works fine, once you get to the pitches, then, that has to stay the same. But again, the

³⁰⁰ Fernandez: “...we had a lot of these gestures already memorized. So we didn’t have to look up at the music. We kind of knew, okay I’m number 1, it’s the same recurring material.” Interview by author, May 2, 2011, [1:18:30].

³⁰¹ Fernandez, interview by author, May 2, 2011, [1: 21:18].

gestural, like on my next system, when we go into duet 1 and 3...maybe we took longer with that gesture. So, instead of [RF sings gesture in different speeds, slow then fast] I have a feeling this was much, as it says, “open.” And we took more liberties with this one. Just because looking at this, I didn’t write a whole lot, except “open form.”³⁰²

Fernandez’s circuitous answer offers many possible, performance situations for the final page that demonstrate its difference from page 3. It was clear that he did not remember the exact way in which they “read” the final page in conjunction with the mobile.

Fernandez’s inability to recall how he and the rest of the CalArts performers read the mobile is linked to the second way in which memory functions in performances of *Calder Piece*, as vital to Brown’s conception of “reading” the mobile simultaneously with the score. During a performance the mobile must be remembered by the percussionist as he or she looks from the score to the mobile and back again. The mobile and its petals are both object and image. The preservation of the mobile as an image in the percussionist’s mind depends on memory, and thus enacts a play between the past image and perception in present time: “...at the outset, that if there be memory, that is, the survival of past images, these images must constantly mingle with our perception of the present, and may even take its place.”³⁰³ A performance of *Calder Piece* requires a process of feedback between the score and the mobile *in the mind* that emulates the feedback condition described by Brown between the percussionists, score and mobile. For Bergson this process of feedback is a multiplicity of relations that begins in two forms of memory.

In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson breaks apart memory to reveal two forms of memory which survive in the past. The first is memory by lesson, which requires a repetition of the same

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, xvi.

effort. By doing so, an individual learns by heart, and “To learn by heart is to create a cerebral mechanism, a habit of the body.”³⁰⁴ Bergson refers to memory by lesson as “movement” because it requires action that occurs in a distinct duration of time: “...the memory of the lesson I have learnt, even if I repeat this lesson only mentally, requires a definite time, the time necessary to develop one by one, were it only in imagination, all the articulatory movements that are necessary: it is no longer a representation, it is an action.”³⁰⁵

Memory that is representation, on the other hand, “has none of the marks of habit.”³⁰⁶ Through habit, a lesson is learned; the habit is the first form of memory. However, “...the lesson once learned is but the composite image in which all readings are blended.”³⁰⁷ Thus the second form of memory is a representation of each reading, the recalled, “memory-image.” As a result the memory-image and the lesson learned are intertwined:

...each of the successive readings differs from the preceding mainly in the fact that the lesson is better known. But it is no less certain that each of them, considered as a new reading and not as a lesson better known, is entirely sufficient to itself, subsists exactly as it occurred, and constitutes with all its concomitant perception an original moment of my history.³⁰⁸

Because of the mind’s intrusion in abstracting one reading, or memory-image, the second form of memory does not adhere to any strict duration of time. Instead, the memory of representation “...is embraced in an intrusion of the mind which I may lengthen or shorten at will; I assign to it any duration I please; there is nothing to prevent my grasping the whole of it instantaneously, as in one picture.”³⁰⁹

³⁰⁴ Ibid, 90.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, 91.

³⁰⁶ Ibid, 90.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid, 91.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

These two forms of memory, habit or action driven memory and representation or “memory-image,” directly relate to the ways in which memory functions in performing *Calder Piece*. Motor habit, Bergson’s first form of memory, is present in the percussionist’s practice of the score. Practicing Brown’s score is a “lesson” to be learned by each percussionist. In this period of practice, the musicians do not necessarily consider the mobile. Instead, the melodic and rhythmic gestures of Brown’s score become “hardwired,” as Fernandez highlighted in his explanation of how he and the CalArts ensemble performed the final page of *Calder Piece* in 1980. The “hardwiring” of the percussionist, acquired in learning the lesson of the score, plays a significant role when he or she must consider the mobile *in addition to the score* during a full rehearsal or performance. Instances of “reading” the mobile are moments of open form, dependent on the score *and* the indeterminable movements of the mobile. Consequently, when Brown directs the performers to “read” the mobile in conjunction with pages 2 and 5, the musical sound should ideally arise during the moment of performance.

However, the material on page 5 is an exact duplicate of the content on page 2. In its second occurrence as page 5, the percussionist must work against his or her motor habits to play the exact same thing that he or she had played for page 2. Although the fifth page, on paper, repeats the musical material from the second page, the two are differentiated by unique interactions with the moving mobile. If the percussionist were to simply play what was remembered from earlier in a performance, the presence of the mobile would make no difference. In this case, the entire piece would change from a multimedia collaboration to a piece grounded solely in the musical score.

An awareness of the first form of memory is also important in regards to page 8, as already explained, a direct copy of page 3. Unlike pages 2 and 5, which *both* duplicate a reading

of the mobile, the relationship between the third and eighth pages is slightly different. In playing the third page, the musical material should not be read in conjunction with the mobile. However, the eighth page depends entirely on a reading of the mobile. In playing this page, then, the performer must not only try to be cognizant of habits learned while practicing the page without the mobile, but also “forget” the linear reading required in performing page 3. Although Bergson associates habitual memory with the unconscious in *Matter and Memory*, in *Calder Piece* performance grounded in habitual memory, from repetitive action during practice, and repeated content in the score, is brought to consciousness in order to produce a collaboration with the mobile during the moment of performance. Perhaps this consciousness is what Fernandez meant when I asked him how the percussionists avoided motor-memory habits between playing pages 3 and 8, and he concluded that they, “just started on, at a different feel...”

When the movements of the mobile are considered in tandem with the contents of Brown’s score, memory also functions in relation to Bergson’s second form of memory, which recalls representation. In *Calder Piece* this representation results from the perception of the mobile in which part of the mobile becomes memory-image. The percussionist depends on this memory-image, a conception different from the object itself, to continue reading the score.

It is possible for habitual memory and the memory-image to intersect in performance. Bergson highlights the junction of habitual action (“movement”) and memory-image. However, in critiquing “philosophers” he also maintains the importance of considering the two types of memory separately:

Instead of dissociating the two elements, memory-image and movement, in order to discover subsequently by what series of operations they come, having each abandoned some part of its original purity to fuse one with the other, they are apt to consider only the mixed phenomenon which results from their coalescence. This phenomenon, being mixed, presents on the one side the aspect of a motor habit, and on the other that of an

image more or less consciously localized. But they will have it that the phenomenon is a simple one.³¹⁰

Performances of *Calder Piece* demonstrate the intricacy Bergson describes. For instance, the percussionist practices Brown's score. In doing so, it is possible for cerebral mechanism to play a part during the moment of performance. In reading the mobile, however, mechanism may be/is interrupted by the process of recalling a representation—that of the petals of the mobile—of a unique perception. At times, the reading may be less successful because of the pervasiveness of the performer's habitual memory. The two forms of memory are not a simple phenomenon but a complex exchange that takes place in the mind.

4.4.1.3 Perception

A "reading" of the mobile depends on Bergson's "memory-image." This memory of representation requires a perception of the mobile and of the score. During a reading of the mobile in the moment of performance the percussionist perceives Calder's mobile. Focusing on only one petal of the thirteen-petal mobile, he or she "memorizes" its outline in order to superimpose it onto the score. The percussionist looks away from the mobile and turns his attention to the score. In order to superimpose what he or she just memorized in viewing the mobile, the performer must now perceive the score. Bergson calls this the "positive side of attention" or "the effort which seeks past memory-images to insert them into the present perception."³¹¹ In this case, Bergson refers to the memory-images that have formed from previous views of the *score*. This is because: "...every *attentive* perception truly involves *reflexion*, in the etymological sense of the word, that is to say the projection, outside ourselves,

³¹⁰ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 103.

³¹¹ *Ibid*, 122.

of an actively created image, identical with, or similar to, the object on which it comes to mould itself.”³¹² What may be taken from this statement by Bergson in regards to *Calder Piece* is that the score is an object, but also in *being* an object, it is an image formed by the percussionist as it is perceived. Through perception which “requires the regular intervention of memory-images” our movements “*bring us back* to the object, to dwell upon its outlines.”³¹³

After having perceived the mobile, the formation of the percussionist’s perception of the score also depends on memory-images created from the most recent view of the mobile and one of its petals. Therefore, the percussionist must not only “dwell” on the outlines of the score but, also, recall the outlines of the mobile and consider them as part of the outlines of the score. The percussionist’s perception of the score involves a “feedback” in the mind between the memory-image of the score and the memory-image of one petal of the mobile. Bergson’s description of this process between matter and memory during perception closely mirrors Brown’s conception of the “feedback condition” in his *Calder Piece*; describing it in the looped metaphor of the circuit.³¹⁴ Although perception is often represented in a linear trajectory, such a representation actually describes a “mind [that] goes further and further from the object, never to return to it.”³¹⁵ As Bergson explains, however: “We maintain, on the contrary, that reflective perception is a *circuit*, in which all the elements, including the perceived object itself, hold each other in a state of mutual tension as in an electric circuit, so that no disturbance starting from the object can stop on its way and remain in the depths of the mind: it must always find its way back to the

³¹² Ibid, 124.

³¹³ Ibid, 118.

³¹⁴ Ibid, 126-127.

³¹⁵ Ibid, 126.

object whence it proceeds.”³¹⁶ This active state of perception allows for the movement of memory in which there is an interaction between memory-images because “...behind these images, which are identical with the object, there are others, stored in memory, which merely resemble others, stored in memory, which merely resemble it, and others, finally, which are only more or less distantly akin to it.”³¹⁷ This pertains to images of the score and the mobile. The performer cannot help but to involve memory-images already perceived. However, this does not necessarily mean retrieval from the past. They are part of the circuitry system of perception, a “feedback condition” of the mind, continually informed by multiple memory-images. As a result, “It is the whole of memory, as we shall see, that passes over into each of these circuits, since memory is always present; but that memory, capable by reason of its elasticity, expanding more and more, reflects upon the object a growing number of suggested images,—sometimes the details of the object itself, sometimes concomitant details which may throw light upon it.”³¹⁸

When considered in terms of a performance of *Calder Piece*, the movement in the minds of the performers mirrors not only the physical motion of the mobile, but also the continual and unstable relations between all of the characters involved. How do these performers’ minds make their “way back” to the mobile while also perceiving the score. In other words, how are memory-images of the mobile realized in order to be used in conjunction with the score during the moment of performance? In addition, does this moment exemplify “presence”; or does the relationship between matter and memory also unveil a new conception of time that is not situated in the past or the present, and instead, in simultaneity?

³¹⁶ Ibid, 126-127.

³¹⁷ Ibid, 125.

³¹⁸ Ibid, 128.

4.4.1.4 From the Virtual to the Actual

The memory-image of the mobile, if left in the mind of the percussionist, is but an instance of pure memory. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson expands ideas formulated in *Time and Free Will*, the book Brown stated as having read, about duration and space as it related to his theories of memory. Gilles Deleuze was the first scholar to make this connection in *Bergsonism* by highlighting that duration, for Bergson, is a psychological experience, in which there “is a case of a ‘transition,’ of a change,’ a *becoming* that endures, a change that is substance itself.”³¹⁹ This experience provides a composite of duration and space in which “duration offers us a succession that is purely internal; space an exteriority without succession (in effect the memory of the past...”³²⁰ Deleuze also associates Bergson’s discussion of duration and space to the distinctions between the objective and subjective, and the virtual and actual in *Time and Free Will*. The actual correlates to a representation of space, “a multiplicity of exteriority, of simultaneity, of juxtaposition, of order, of quantitative, of *difference in degree*.”³²¹ Space is objective, as Deleuze highlights from *Time and Free Will*:

Bergson in fact specifies that an *object* can be divided up in an infinity of ways. Now ever before these divisions are made, they are grasped by thought as possible, without anything in the total aspect of the object.³²²

This explains why, in perceiving the mobile in a performance of *Calder Piece*, it is possible for the musicians to fathom reading or rather dividing, the art object into “an infinity of ways” in order to produce sound. However, the objective is only one half of the composite of duration and space. In addition, there is the subjective, represented in time, “the other type of

³¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Brooklyn, New York: Urzone, Inc., 1988), 37.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid, 38.

³²² Ibid, 40.

multiplicity [that] appears in duration: it is an internal multiplicity of succession, of fusion, of organization, of heterogeneity, of qualitative discrimination, or of *difference in kind*.”³²³ The virtual is subjective because, as Deleuze quotes Bergson, “A complex feeling will contain a fairly large number of simple elements; but as long as these elements do not stand out with perfect clearness, we cannot say that they were completely realized, and as soon as consciousness has a distinct perception of them, the psychic state which results from their synthesis will have changed for this very reason.”³²⁴ Both objectivity and subjectivity are multiplicities, however, the latter corresponds to that of memory. Because it is subjective or virtual, “this memory can only become actual by means of the perception which attracts it.”³²⁵ Consequently, in perceiving the mobile and translating this memory-image onto the score to create sound, there is yet another movement from the subjective to the objective; or from the virtual to the actual.

The movement from the virtual to actual is centrifugal, “stimulation from within can give birth to sensations, either by its action on the cerebral cortex or on other centres.”³²⁶ Thus, in order to perform the mobile, the idea and memory-image of one of its petals is a starting point. The sensations created by this image move the body to action, or performance. As Bergson explains:

Pure memories, as they become actual, tend to bring about, within the body, all the corresponding sensations. But these virtual sensations themselves, in order to become real, must tend to urge the body to action, and to impress upon it those movements and attitudes of which they are the habitual antecedent.³²⁷

³²³ Ibid, 38.

³²⁴ Ibid, 42.

³²⁵ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 163.

³²⁶ Ibid, 168.

³²⁷ Ibid.

By bringing these memories to action the body also bridges duration, a subjective multiplicity, with space, an objective multiplicity:

The progress by which the virtual image realizes itself is nothing else than the series of stages by which this image gradually obtains from the body useful actions or useful attitudes. The stimulation of the so-called sensory centres is the last of these stages: it is the prelude to a motor reaction, the beginning of an action in space.³²⁸

The movement to action is a movement from pure memory to perception that Bergson summarizes in an illustration of three segments: pure memory (A-B), Memory-image (B-C) and Perception (C-D). These segments comprise a horizontal axis that intersects a vertical axis formed by perception and memory, the relationship already discussed above. Thought is comprised of movement along the horizontal axis. As a result, perception is vital to forming the virtual, as well as the actual.

Following Bergson, Deleuze underlines this movement from “A” to “D,” the horizontal axis of thought which is a movement from pure memory to perception, as one of “rotation” in which “the past literally moves toward the present in order to find a point of contact (or of contraction) with it.”³²⁹ As this movement of rotation occurs, however, there is one of “translation, an expansion of the past in the present: recollection-images restore the distinctions of the past in the present—at least those that are useful.”³³⁰ Translation and rotation work in tandem and represent a virtual state of potentiality. They are stabilized by a third movement, a “dynamic movement,” or the “attitude of the body [that] ensures the harmony of the two preceding moments, correcting the one by the other and pushing them to their limit.”³³¹ It is the body of the percussionist that makes certain that the movements of rotation and translation,

³²⁸ Ibid, 163.

³²⁹ Deleuze, 70.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid, 70-71.

created in the mind after he or she has perceived the score and the mobile, combine in performance. To complete actualization, “mechanical movement of the body ensures the proper utility of the whole and its performance in the present.”³³² Dynamic and mechanical movements represent a state of actuality. All four aspects of movement summarize the motion that operates in Bergson’s infamous metaphor of the cone, in which perception and memory intersect with experience, and the past and present coexist. This experience in the case of *Calder Piece* is performance.

4.4.1.5 Present and Past

Because it stimulates motor reaction, the movements of rotation and translation, as the virtual, signify an “attitude of presence” rather than the present itself. According to Bergson:

That which I call my present is my attitude with regard to the immediate future; it is my impending action. My present is, then sensori-motor. Of my past, that alone becomes image and consequently sensation, at least nascent, which can collaborate in that action, insert itself in that attitude, in a word make itself useful; but from the moment that it becomes image, the past leaves the state of pure memory and coincides with part of my present.³³³

Thus what is normally considered the “present” is often defined as “that which is.” However, as soon as “what is being made” *is*, it exists in what is often defined as the past. As Bergson summarizes, “When we think this present as going to be, it exists not yet; and when we think it as existing, it is already past.”³³⁴ However, the past does not cease to exist because the present seems to have replaced it. The rotation and translation of memory consists of virtual images that are created through moments that have now passed. In this case the past becomes

³³² Ibid, 71.

³³³ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 180.

³³⁴ Ibid, 193.

useful when it, as memory-image, encounters perception. Thus perception, “however instantaneous, consists then in an incalculable multitude of remembered elements; and in truth every perception is already memory.”³³⁵ The “moment of performance” may appear to be rooted in the present wherein perception *acts* in a reading of the score and mobile. This action, through the rotation and translation of memory is also grounded in the past: *Practically we perceive only the past*, the pure present being the invisible progress of the past gnawing into the future.”³³⁶

The coexistence of the past and the present during a performance of *Calder Piece* depends on a feedback of perception and between perception and memory, wherein the percussionist composes his or her own momentary collage of the musical events already collaged in Brown’s score. The “composition of performance,” in its movements between perception, memory and memory-image, progresses from the actual to the virtual and back again.

4.5 CONCLUSIONS: QUESTIONING ORDER

Whereas in *Variations V* the music, movement and imagery directly pointed to and then questioned popular signification within American society during the 1960s; the cultural and social importance of *Calder Piece* does not operate in this manner. A scholar might be tempted to illuminate the political potentiality of Brown’s conception of open form in the 1950s. In fact, this was the position of European musicians and musicologists of the time. Musicologists, Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Hans Helms, were infatuated with Brown’s music precisely because of the

³³⁵ Ibid, 194.

³³⁶ Ibid, 194.

European, political agenda they projected onto it. Brown discussed this European interest in his interview with John Yaffé. In response to Yaffé's question, "How do you account for the European musical community taking to your music so avidly," Brown responded:

They locked on to my, and John's, music because we were what they called *antiauthoritarian*. They had just gone through that Hitler thing. I was in Europe for the first time at the end of '56 and beginning of '57. In Cologne, I met Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Sylvano Bussoti, who were living together, and Hans Helms, a musicologist. Helms and Metzger were disciples of Horckheimer and Adorno, and those two philosophers were absolutely, insanely, against antiauthoritarianism...they see *Folio*: the composer's not there, it doesn't need a conductor; it's completely antiauthoritarian. And they hated Karlheinz, because Karlheinz was real dictatorial...control, control, control.³³⁷

What Metzger, Helms and Bussoti found in Brown's music, an anti-authoritarian musical language, countered the control felt in the musical language of composers such as Stockhausen. From their combined perspectives, Brown's music and one group of pieces in particular, the pieces which textbooks still gravitate towards in order to summarize Brown's aesthetic, *Folio*, liberated the performer. In turn, this liberation questioned the authority of the composer. By doing so, Metzger and Helms read Brown's music as a direct statement that commented on authoritarian political regimes in Europe. They read the freedoms of Earle Brown, a white, male citizen of the United States onto the liberties offered in *Folio*'s scores. According to Brown, he "...could not get it into Metzger's mind that I had done these things *politically*."³³⁸

Instead the importance of involving the performer in *Folio* and pieces composed in the 1960s such as *Corroboree*, *String Quartet* and *Calder Piece*, demonstrated Brown's position as a performer. To Yaffé he explained:

³³⁷ John Yaffé, "An Interview with Composer Earle Brown," *Contemporary Music Review* 26, nos. ¾ (June/August 2007): 305.

³³⁸ Ibid.

I said that I'm interested in *inviting* the performers into the process. I used to play with jazz musicians. We were equal. We played together, we worked together, we conversed together...³³⁹

In the “composition of performance” of Brown’s pieces, emphasis should not be placed on the liberation of the performer but on the conversation that the composer has with the musician during a performance.

Brown further clarified how he felt about the European reception of his music during the middle of the twentieth century, in an interview with Amy Beal. He recounted:

I met Metzger and Helms in Cologne in 1957, at the end of my trip, and I was very surprised, and didn’t understand it, but they considered Morty and me and John, our activities were basically politically motivated, and I kept saying, ‘Well, that’s very nice of you, but it wasn’t politically motivated at all.’ It shows my interest in human performance potential, and it shows my interest in multiplicities of beautiful effects from the same material. Because I was influence by Calder...and you see a Calder mobile and it’s gorgeous, and you see it five times in a row on different days it’s still gorgeous. Form is a function of the object itself, and that process is what I was trying to work with—and I did work with.³⁴⁰

Although Brown’s interest in the “human performance potential” should not be associated to any one, specific political agenda, such as authoritarianism or antiauthoritarianism in Europe, his unique marriage of form and mobility through textual and perceptual collage does question preconceived notions of order, notions that also permeated and continue to permeate society. A performance of *Calder Piece* partakes in a process of “becoming.” Before the start of a performance, the actors that will partake in Brown’s “feedback” condition are essentially immobile. The mobile is still, the percussionists wait for a cue, and the score in text does not change. During a performance a progressive movement develops. This movement gains power: in select moments, the minds of the performers alter the collaged score so that the performance

³³⁹ Ibid, 305.

³⁴⁰ Amy Beal, “An Interview with Earle Brown,” *Contemporary Music Review* 26 3/4 (June/August 2007): 348.

itself *becomes* collaged. This movement of the multiple layers of collage in *Calder Piece* questions the ease with which order—that which the audience expects—is automatically accepted in society.

5.0 SUMMERSPACE: A SPACE-PLAY COLLAGE OF SURFACES

The lights on stage slowly brighten to reveal a speckled backdrop radiating day-glow hues of yellow, orange, pink, green and blue. Shimmering dots vibrate the surface and arrest the eye. The strange dynamic stillness is broken by a girl who runs quickly on stage. Silence and the pattering of footsteps. She circles the stage. Individual pitches from a piano. In a leotard matching the pointillist rendering of the backdrop, the dancer blends into the surrounding when she suddenly halts. Another woman enters. She leaps with one leg repeatedly in a circle. A third woman enters, repeating the motions of the second female dancer. Speckled piano playing. The three halt in a small circle in what appears to be third position; however, their heels are raised and their backs are hunched over with their heads down. A male dancer enters to perform a complex series of turns. After two more men enter the stage, “the six dance independently of the others, with none of the traditional pas de deux and ensemble dancing.”³⁴¹ Although “at one point all six dancers are leaping across the stage, all at different speeds,” at other times there is only one member on stage performing intricate footwork while completing leaps and turns.³⁴² It is “like the passage of birds, stopping for moments on the ground and then going on, or automobiles more relentlessly throbbing along turnpikes and under and over cloverleaves.”³⁴³ They suspend

³⁴¹ Mary Campbell, “Modern Ballet Lauded at New York Premiere,” *Corpus Christi Texas Times*, April 15, 1966.

³⁴² Marcia B. Siegel, “Bostonsnatch,” *Dance Magazine* (January 1975): 67.

³⁴³ Merce Cunningham, “Summerspace Story: How a Dance Came to Be,” *Dance Magazine* 40, no. 6 (1966): 52.

the motion of their bodies and “literally fade into the backdrop”; upon a release, they emerge “from it as a three-dimensional extension of the flat design.”³⁴⁴ Continuous motion. “Often a dancer picks up a gesture and carries on with it at a different pace after the first dancer has left the stage.”³⁴⁵ Irregular, regular sounds. The choreographed repetition mirrors the dotted reverberations emanating from the spotted backdrop and pointed tones of the piano. There is a “lyricism [that] flow[s] through the dancers’ bodies, through torsos uninhibited by traditional rules of deportment.”³⁴⁶ A dappled collage of impressionistic, abstracted expressionism.

In August of 1958, Merce Cunningham and his dance company settled into a six-week stay at the Connecticut College School of Dance for the Eleventh Annual American Dance Festival. The time spent in Connecticut was “filled with daily teaching during the mornings, and the choreographing of two dances during the rest of the day,” one of which was titled, *Summerspace*, a collaged impression of which is provided above.³⁴⁷ Cunningham claimed that “the summer part of the title came after the dance was finished, but the notion of space was always present,” a notion that was explained in a feature story in 1966 for *Dance Magazine*: “Working with *Summerspace*...I fumbled around with steps and written notes about steps, as I often do, but the principal momentum was a concern for steps that carry one through a space, and not only into it.”³⁴⁸ Although this concern for space materialized in Cunningham’s planning of the choreography with chance methods before the company’s arrival in Connecticut, the rehearsal parlor of Knowlton House at the college, “an elegant room with a high ceiling, chandeliers, a

³⁴⁴ Walter Terry, “*Summerspace* Ballet Version is Near-Loser,” *New York Herald Tribune*, April 16, 1966.

³⁴⁵ Siegel, 67.

³⁴⁶ Terry.

³⁴⁷ Merce Cunningham, “*Summerspace* Story”: 52. The other dance prepared at this time was *Antic Meet*. The music used for this performance was the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* by John Cage. Subsequent performances were sometimes performed with Cage’s *Solo for Piano with Fontana Mix*.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

beautifully polished wood floor and tall windows opening onto an expanse of green and vistas of lush and stately shade trees,” visually amplified it. The view even perhaps conjured the spirit of summer.³⁴⁹ According to Carolyn Brown, a principal dancer in Cunningham’s troupe at the time, when “stripped of its furniture, the room, approximately one hundred feet long and fifty feet wide, gave...the glorious feeling of dancing in a vast Viennese ballroom, with limitless space.”³⁵⁰ The room paralleled the boundless setting in which Cunningham imagined the choreography for *Summerspace*.

On August 17, 1958, Cunningham and his company moved *Summerspace* from their rehearsal space to the stage of Palmer Auditorium for the Eleventh American Dance Festival. For the performance the stage featured a backdrop and costumes, created by Robert Rauschenberg. As Michelle Potter has pointed out in her article, “‘A License to Do Anything’: Robert Rauschenberg and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company,” Rauschenberg contributed set designs and costumes for over twenty collaborations with Cunningham between 1954 and 1964. However, “*Summerspace* is...one of the rare Cunningham pieces for which there exists any kind of written discussion between the choreographer and the visual artist.”³⁵¹ In a postcard dated July of 1958, Cunningham expressed his intentions of creating a limitless space by stating that *Summerspace* was, “About 15 minutes long, seems to be doing with people and velocities, at least a hell of a lot of it is on the fast side, four girls and Remy and myself, I have the feeling it’s

³⁴⁹ Carolyn Brown, *Chance and Circumstance: Twenty Years with Cage and Cunningham* (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 2007), 218. Cunningham also mentioned this: “Perhaps this space-play was enhanced by the rehearsal area we used that summer. It was a large ballroom, as we called it, actually an enormous living-room in one of the school’s dormitories with ceiling to floor windows, and chandeliers, a space roughly 100 feet long by 50 feet deep. All the sofas, couches, lamps and tables had been removed to open the space for the rehearsals...” (Cunningham, “*Summerspace* Story,” 52).

³⁵⁰ Cunningham, “*Summerspace* Story,” 52.

³⁵¹ Michelle Potter, “‘A License to Do Anything’: Robert Rauschenberg and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company,” *Dance Chronicle* 16, no. 1 (1993): 8.

like looking at part of an enormous landscape and you can only see the action in this particular portion of it.”³⁵² Rauschenberg responded to Cunningham’s vision with a backdrop and costumes whose design played with the choreographer’s conceptions of movement and space.³⁵³

As Potter describes:

...with the assistance of Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg covered the cloth with small dots of paint in shades of brown, yellow, orange, pink, blue, and green, treating what was essentially an oversized canvas as a surface to be enlivened. In part, he achieved this through the ‘pointillistic’ technique he employed. With the dots of color, he established a luminosity akin to that of a Seurat canvas and, especially when the dots were enhanced by theatrical lighting, a shimmering movement. In part, this enlivening of the surface was also achieved by repeating in the costumes the colors and design of the back cloth. Rauschenberg dressed the dancers in a basic outfit of leotard and tights, which he spray-painted (again with the assistance of Johns) in the same pattern of dots and in the same colors he had chosen for the backcloth.³⁵⁴

The relation of the leotards to the backdrop added to visual ambiguity; the indefinite space widened even more when considered in tandem with the choreography. Not only did the sea of dots create a vastness on stage that crept into the audience, but according to Potter, “whenever a dancer moved, the backcloth was set in motion; whenever he or she passed, its movement was arrested.”³⁵⁵ However, the movement of the backdrop was also extended by the speckled sounds of the music.

Cunningham’s relationship with the musicians and composers living in New York in the 1950s and 1960s is well known. Not only has his aesthetic been described as having been influenced by John Cage—including Cunningham’s chance procedures, his interest in Buddhist philosophy, his insistence on stillness, a gestural relation to silence, and his maintenance of the

³⁵² Merce Cunningham, *Changes: Notes on Choreography*, ed. Francis Star (New York: Something Else Press, 1968), no pagination. Also noted in: David Vaughan, *Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years*, ed. Melissa Harris (New York: Aperture, 1997), 110. Potter also uses the quote in her article (Potter 9).

³⁵³ Potter, 8.

³⁵⁴ Potter, 9.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

individuality of each art in performance—but his partner in work and life also linked him to the “Cagean” circle of composers and the abstract expressionist artists, some of his closest friends. The artistic ideas in this network of New York artists, composers and musicians culminated to form countless programs and collaborations during the 1950s and 60s, including the multimedia event discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, *Variations V*. Cunningham’s contribution played a vital role in the complex interface for the production of simultaneity between music, choreography, film and engineering.

As another multimedia collaboration featuring choreography by Cunningham, the examination of *Summerspace* in Chapter 5 of my dissertation relates naturally to themes discussed in previous chapters, most notably that of movement, potentiality, collage and the dynamic relationship of indeterminacy and determinacy within and across multiple modes of media. *Variations V* and *Summerspace* are both dance events; however, differences arise between the two in regards to the interdependency of the collaborators. Unlike *Variations V*, in which the occurrence of music depends on technology and the movement of dancers in time, *Summerspace*’s music occurs independent of any activation on the part of movement by the dancers. Furthermore, even though movement in the backdrop of *Summerspace* is optically activated by dancers as a result of the costumes they wear, Rauschenberg’s contribution also exists without the movements of Cunningham’s choreography.

Although Cunningham worked with John Cage in the creation of *Variations V*, and Cage composed many of the pieces featured alongside Cunningham’s choreography, Morton Feldman, Earle Brown and Christian Wolff also collaborated with Cunningham, creating music for his dance company. Of these composers, the choreographer chose Morton Feldman to create the music for *Summerspace*.

Titled *Ixion*, the music for *Summerspace* is a version of the graph scores devised in the early 1950s. Feldman began creating his graph music as early as 1950. He explained the unlikely origins of the scores in an interview with Jan Williams on April 22, 1983:

I have no idea how it came about. Actually, I was living in the same building as John Cage and he invited me to dinner. And it wasn't ready yet. John was making wild rice the way most people don't know how it should be made. That is, just waiting for boiling water and then putting new boiling water into the rice and then having another pot boiling and then draining the rice, etc, etc, so we were waiting a long time for the wild rice to be ready. It was while waiting for the wild rice that I just sat down at his desk and picked up a piece of notepaper and started to doodle. And what I doodled was a freely drawn page of graph paper—and what emerged were high, middle, and low categories. It was just automatic—I never had any conversation about it heretofore, you know—never discussed it.³⁵⁶

Following this story, Williams asked Feldman, “What was actually the first graph piece?” to which the composer answered:

The first piece was *Projection I* for solo cello, which I wrote for the marvelous cellist Seymour Barab...It was just again categories of pizzicato sounds, harmonies, and arco, and aspects of arco-like ponticello. And then I gave high, middle, and low, and each box corresponded to a metronome beat. At that time it was 72 which was very slow then. It was endless, the ictus being 72. And then I got started writing these pieces.³⁵⁷

Feldman's proclivity for the graph continued after creating *Projections I-V*, appearing throughout his *Intersections* series. As Brett Boutwell has determined in his study of Feldman's scores of the period, Feldman's style of the graph transformed between *Projections* and *Intersections*, and also between earlier and later numbers within *Intersections*. Slowly, Feldman

³⁵⁶ Morton Feldman, interview by Jan Williams, “An Interview with Jan Williams,” April 22, 1983, in *Morton Feldman Says: Selected interviews and Lectures*, ed. Chris Villars (London: Hyphen Press, 2006), 153.

³⁵⁷ Ibid. Brett Boutwell has noted that there is uncertainty surrounding if *Projections I* and the piece made while waiting for the rice to boil are one and the same. He states: “Based upon documents in Feldman Collection of the PSS, Felix Meyer speculates that *Projection I*, was composed during the final week of December, 1950. In ‘The Avant-Garde: Progress or Stalemate?’ Feldman indicates that the work he spontaneously executed in Cage's apartment was itself *Projection I*; in Williams, “An Interview with Morton Feldman,” he suggests that the latter may have followed after the initial experiment.” Brett Boutwell, “A Static Sublime: Morton Feldman and the Visual, 1950-1970” (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, 2006), 49. For a detailed analysis and historicization of Feldman's *Projections* series, read Boutwell, pp. 50-70.

integrates more indeterminacy. Unlike in his *Projections* series, the performers controlled dynamic levels, as well as specific aspects of time and duration, as outlined by Boutwell:

A more significant modification made between the *Projections* and *Intersections* was Feldman's decision in the new series to permit performers greater license in timing their entries, allowing them to initiate their notes at any point within the temporal duration of a given box on the grid...With this modification to his performance instructions, Feldman introduced rhythmic indeterminacy to his compositional practice for the first time. In the later *Intersections*, nos. 2, 3, and 4, he would furthermore dispense with the quasi-metric division of durational units into groups of four, as apparent in the first two *Intersections* and in the *Projections*.³⁵⁸

By increasing the amount of indeterminacy in his graph scores, Feldman also increased the performer's role in determining the sounds of his music. Unfortunately, the scores did not produce results that he desired. Feldman had "never thought of the graph as an art of improvisation, but more as a totally abstract sonic adventure."³⁵⁹ To allow the sounds to be themselves, Feldman stopped using his graph notation for a period of time in the 1950s, as described by the composer in *Kulcher*:

Between 1953 and 1958 the graph was abandoned. I felt that if the means were to be imprecise the result must be terribly clear. And I lacked that sense of clarity to go on. I hoped to find it in precise notation; i.e., *Extensions for Three Pianos*, etc. But precision did not work for me either. It was too one-dimensional.³⁶⁰

As a result, by the late 1950s and early 60s, "in works scored for ensembles equal to or greater than seven voices, [Feldman] reverted to modified versions of his graph format, where the relationship of individual parts to one another is specified with greater precision."³⁶¹ In *Ixion*, the precision manifested itself in a careful balance of indeterminate and determined relations. It

³⁵⁸ Boutwell, 75-76.

³⁵⁹ Morton Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, ed. B.H. Friedman (Cambridge, MA: Exact Change, 2000),

6. Original publication: Morton Feldman, "Liner Notes," *Kulcher* 2, no. 6 (Summer 1962): 57-60.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, 6-7.

³⁶¹ Boutwell, 167. In addition to *Ixion*, *Atlantis* (1959), ...*Out of 'Last Pieces'* (1961), *The Straits of Magellan* (1961), and *In Search of an Orchestration* (1967) are graph scores for larger ensembles.

is scored for piano, cellos (3 to 7), basses (2 to 4), 3 flutes, clarinet, trumpet, horn, and trombone. Even though Feldman determined the instrumentation, timbre and register, thus predicated the overall shape of the sound, during any performance of the piece, the formation of pitch, duration, and rhythm are indeterminate. The fusion of this music with the choreography and décor, and the interaction between these modes of media is also indeterminate. Cunningham began choreographing *Summerspace* before Feldman started to compose *Ixion*. The music was commissioned by Cunningham for the ballet, as indicated on the final page of the score in the “Directions for Performance.” Once commissioned, Feldman created the piece separately from Cunningham’s choreography. The music was not composed *for* the choreography and the choreography was not created under the influence of the music. The artists were not even in the same geographic location, as mentioned by Cunningham in a 1977 interview with Jacqueline Lesschaeve. He recalled, “Morton Feldman, who did the music, was in New York, Bob must have been in South Carolina, and I was in Connecticut.”³⁶² When Feldman explained this concept to a friend he said, “Suppose your daughter is getting married, and her wedding dress won’t be ready until the morning of the wedding, but it’s by Dior.”³⁶³ In *Summerspace*, there is an “underlying principle that music and dance [and painting] could be separate entities independent and interdependent, sharing a common time.”³⁶⁴

This collaborative method, the convergence of media independently created, demonstrates a multimedia collaboration which negotiates different levels of indeterminacy in

³⁶² Merce Cunningham, interview by Jacqueline Lesschaeve, in *The Dancer and the Dance* (New York: Marion Boyars, 1985), 97.

³⁶³ Alastair Macaulay, “Design Meets Dance, and Rules are Broken,” *New York Times*, June 17, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/17/arts/dance/17maca.html> (accessed January 22, 2012).

³⁶⁴ Merce Cunningham, “A Collaborative Process between Music and Dance,” in *Merce Cunningham: Dancing in Space and Time*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (Chicago, IL: A Capella Books, 1992), 138. Original publication: Merce Cunningham, “A Collaborative Process between Music and Dance,” *Tri-Quarterly* 54 (Spring 1982): 173-186.

conjunction with determinacy. Similar to his work for *Variations V*, Cunningham's choreography for *Summerspace* is a determined aspect of the performance. Unlike his preparations for *Variations V*, in the latter, chance methods were used to obtain choreographic details such as direction, length, speed, and the interaction between the six dancers of the piece. Feldman's music, *Ixion*, is not derived by chance procedures but includes indeterminate elements in performance. A performance of *Summerspace* therefore combines chance and indeterminacy with determined elements while simultaneously maintaining the individuality of its music, dance and set design.

According to David Vaughan of the MCDC Archives, "*Summerspace* is one of the most striking examples of Cunningham's collaborative method, in which the artists work independently rather than in close consultation, yet each creative element makes a potent contribution to the whole."³⁶⁵ The purpose of my fifth chapter is to reveal why *Summerspace* is such a "striking example of collaborative method" on the threshold of the 1960s, an investigation of which has not been undertaken by any musicologist, dance or art historian to date. Informed by research conducted at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archive, I argue that a performance of *Summerspace* showcases an innovative approach to expression in which there is an egalitarian coexistence of its separate yet combined artistic forces. As I consider the modes of media separately in the three parts of Chapter 5, I demonstrate how the choreography, music and stage design of *Summerspace*, each in its own way, concentrates on redefining the concept of surface as a new "depth," i.e. the notion in which cultural and art-historical meanings may be found. For Cunningham, discovering

³⁶⁵ Vaughan, 110.

this involves a collage aesthetic; for Rauschenberg, pointillist décor that combines with abstract expressionism; and Feldman reconsiders surface as a new depth *in between* space and time. I position *Summerspace* between modernist and postmodernist thought by highlighting its unique mode of collaging music, dance and design in performance—a collage of surface and indeterminacies. My approach to the chapter is also collaged; a discourse between dance and literary theory, theories in visual art, and the individual aesthetics of Feldman, Cunningham and Rauschenberg as stated by the artists themselves.

Cunningham's strong affinity for the separation of music and dance results from his strong anxiety towards the imposition of meaning, and not meaning itself. For him, the meaning *was* and *is* dance. This is exactly what I wish to highlight in my dissertation project when I maintain in the introductory chapter that the avant-garde challenged, in its own terms, the grounds that called for action and change in mainstream America in 1960s. As Cunningham explains in "The Impermanent Art," his essay from 1955, "When I dance, it means: this is what I am doing...it eliminates the necessity to feel that the meaning of dancing lies in everything but the dancing, and further eliminates cause-and-effect worry as to what movement should follow what movement, frees one's feelings about continuity, and makes it clear that each act of life can be its own history."³⁶⁶ Feldman imitates this line of thought in his essay, "The Anxiety of Art," "The anxiety of art is a special condition, and actually is not an anxiety at all, though it has all the aspects of one. It comes about when art becomes separate from what we know, when it speaks with its own emotion."³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ Merce Cunningham, "The Impermanent Art," *Arts* 7, no. 3 (1955): 69-77.

³⁶⁷ Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, 32. Original Publication: Morton Feldman, "The Anxiety of Art," *Art in America* 61, no. 5 (September/October 1973): 88-93.

These statements could not get any closer to Cage's statement, "I have nothing to say, and I am saying it," in his "Lecture on Nothing."³⁶⁸ By maintaining the individuality of music, dance, and also the set and costume design, Cunningham, Feldman and Rauschenberg "eliminate the necessity to feel that meaning" lies *behind* these arts. Instead of unearthing a *depth* of meaning behind the veils of music, dance and design, the meaning *is* the surface of the music, dance and design, individually and in collage. The exploration of surface in relation to the potential intersections in space and time, the intersections that did occur in space and time, and the continued intersections that *could* occur in space and in time again for *Summerspace*, illuminates the power of avant-garde multimedia performance in redefining spatiality in forming an entirely new type of social action.

5.1 CUNNINGHAM'S CHOREOGRAPHY

5.1.1 Chance Method

Cunningham's concern for space in *Summerspace* had much to do with the conception of movement in his choreography; movement that "would be continuous, and could carry the dancer into the playing area, and out of it."³⁶⁹ Even though the dancers would be on stage—a limited space—the movements of the dancers would be one aspect of the performance that could aid in extending it. To create this illusion, many aspects of the choreography were prepared in

³⁶⁸ John Cage, *Silence* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 109.

³⁶⁹ Cunningham, "Summerspace Story," 52.

advance of the company's rehearsals in Connecticut, beginning with the division of the stage.³⁷⁰

Cunningham explained this division in both the 1966 *Dance Magazine* article, as well as, in his interview with Jacqueline Lesschaeve. In the interview, his explanation is not specific to the stage in Frank Loomis Palmer Auditorium: "I decided to number the entrance and exits, one, three, five, and two, four, six, and to link them by all the possible trajectories."³⁷¹

In the article, however, Cunningham explained this division in terms of how it was treated for the rehearsal parlor and on stage at Connecticut College:

For our rehearsals, we set a limit to the space by defining the corners with the few straight indestructible chairs left. This was a space comparable to the stage dimensions of the Frank Loomis Auditorium in which we would perform. In the choreography, I also had defined the exit and entrance spaces [as mentioned to Lesschaeve above], that is, separate wings on each side of the rehearsal area into or out of which the dancer would enter or leave stage. These spaces were 6 in number, three on each side and they were numbered: Stage Left, 1, 3, 5; Stage Right, 2, 4, 6.³⁷²

The numbering system devised by Cunningham for each side of the stage created a gamut of possible directional trajectories on the space of the stage, as he detailed to Lesschaeve:

You can go one to one, on to two, one to three, one to four, one to five, one to six...that's six, then if you go to two, you can go to two to one—that's just the reverse—so you go two to three, two to four, two to five, two to six—so that's five. From three—one, two and three are taken care of, so you go three to three, three to four, three to five, three to six—that's four. Four is take care of except for four—and five and six then five to five, and to six, then six to six—and it comes out to twenty-one altogether: $6+5+4+3+2+1 = 21$ space possibilities...³⁷³

The twenty-one "space possibilities" created twenty-one lines which contained a sequence of movement(s) for the dancers. The movements ranged from "simple to complex."³⁷⁴

³⁷⁰ In his 1977 interview with Jacqueline Lesschaeve, Cunningham states that "...I was still working on a proscenium stage at that time" (Cunningham, *Dancer and the Dance*, 96).

³⁷¹ Cunningham, *Dancer and the Dance*, 96.

³⁷² Cunningham, "Summerspace Story," 52.

³⁷³ Cunningham, *Dancer and the Dance*, 96.

³⁷⁴ Cunningham, "Summerspace Story," 52.

For instance, “1 to 5 was turning, 3 to 3 consisted of leaps, runs, walks, skips in repetition, 2 to 4 was a complex whirling phrase.”³⁷⁵ Some of these phrases were repeated; others were not. In his book, *Changes: Notes on Choreography*, Cunningham provided three pages of notes in regards to these lines, including details about the entrance/exist space of number three (3 to 3, 3 to 4, 3 to 5, and 3 to 6), as well those for 1 to 4, 1 to 5, and 1 to 6.³⁷⁶ Whereas the description for line “3 to 3” is very simple, Cunningham’s directions for line “3 to 4” is multifaceted. He wrote:

1. Turn a la 2nd (plie possible on 1)
2. Step on L and leg swing with R forward,
(leg-swing finishes...Back) side
(R. Leg) back
3. Weight goes to R. leg & continue turn
and end in attitude arriere, arms L R
4. Bring back (L) leg down and turns (4th)
(bent....) & body bent....
(repeat opp. or same side) (add jumps on 2, 3, &/or 4)³⁷⁷

Another page of Cunningham's notes of the movement for *Summerspace* is provided in *The Dancer and the Dance*.³⁷⁸ These notes outline the movements for lines 4 to 2, 6 to 7, 2 to 4, 4 to 5, 5 to 3, 1 to 5, and 3 to 5. Once again the movements differ in complexity for each line.

With this detailed directional and phrase gamut, Cunningham then used chance methods to determine how the directional lines were to cover the space. There were eight choreographic details determined by chance outlined in *Dance Magazine*:

1. Direction, i.e., from where to where. This gave the movement in its basic form.
2. Whether the movement was done fast, medium or slow.
3. Whether the movement happened in the air, across the surface, or on the ground.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Cunningham, *Changes*, no pagination.

377 Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Copies of Cunningham's notes for *Summerspace* are provided in five figures: "Figure 6. *Summerspace*: space structure" (preceding p.96); "Figure 7. *Summerspace*: movement" (preceding p.96); "Figure 9. *Summerspace*, *Winterbranch*: Boston 1974" (preceding p.108); "Figures 14-15. *Summerspace*: trajectories" (following p.131).

4. Length of time in seconds, assuming 5 seconds as a minimum.
5. Shape of space, i.e., in what way the space was covered (straight lines, diagonal lines, circular, and so on).
6. Number of dancers involved in this particular action.
7. Did they perform this action together or separately.
8. Did they end the action on or off the stage.³⁷⁹

The direction, speed, height, depth, length, and shape were formulated for each of the six dancers, providing a sequence unique to each dancer.³⁸⁰ Because chance methods determined these aspects of the choreography, “there were possibilities of crossing, or coming together, sometimes it turned out that two or three dancers got the same movements, [however] more often it turned out they got different movements.”³⁸¹ Despite the fragmented nature of Cunningham’s chance method, the process created a seamless space, in which movements from classical ballet united with, as Carolyn Brown described, “walks, runs, skips, and leaps, and the surprising use of falls to the floor [that] were not at all familiar to ballet dancers...” outside of the MCDC troupe.³⁸²

5.1.2 An Aesthetic of Collage

Roger Copeland, a renowned scholar of theater and dance, initiated the first discussion of the fragmented, juxtaposed nature of Cunningham’s choreography in 2004. In “Cunningham, Cage, and Collage,” the eighth chapter of his book, *Merce Cunningham and the Modernizing of Modern Dance*, Copeland views Cunningham as an artist who, inspired by cubism and

³⁷⁹ Cunningham, “Summerspace Story,” 54.

³⁸⁰ The original cast of dancers included: Cunningham, Carolyn Brown, Remy Charlip, Viola Farber, Cynthia Stone, and Marilyn Wood.

³⁸¹ Cunningham, *Dancer and the Dance*, 97.

³⁸² Carolyn Brown, “Summerspace: Three Revivals,” *Dance Research Journal* 34, no.1 (Summer 2002): 74-75.

surrealism, incorporated multiple aspects of collage in his choreography and in the collaborative process. Drawing on Donald Kuspit's definition of "collage" as an "awkward amalgam of three unresolved elements (1) purely worldly elements, especially such fragments of dailiness as newspapers; (2) purely artistic elements such as line color, and shape—the typical constituents of form; and (3) mixed or impure elements, or residual images of an imitated nature," Copeland likens Cunningham's choreographic work to the surprising juxtapositions found in synthetic collages by Picasso or Rauschenberg's three-dimensional assemblages and combines.³⁸³ If we were to extend the analogy, the most obvious act of collage becomes Cunningham's collaborative aesthetic, which capitalized on the simultaneity of independence and interdependence. Similarly to a finished cubist painting, whose elements may be distinguished individually and yet create a single work of art, dance, music and décor maintain their autonomy while combining to create a multimedia event in Cunningham's collaborations.

Copeland's most interesting assessment of Cunningham's collage aesthetic deals with the artist's attention to the illusion of space. In a collage by Picasso, such as *Still Life with Bowl and Fruit* (1912), perhaps there are three pieces of fruit on the upper left-hand corner, nested in a bowl constructed of newspaper. To the right of the bowl emerge the tuning pegs of a stringed instrument. Conceivably a violin, the instrument rests on a table constructed by the negative space of the arch cut into a newspaper with the title, "La vie sportive." Next to the violin is a glass cup drawn on newspaper above another clipping, a representation of its shadow or even refraction from the glass that portrays the text, "urnal," presumably from the word "journal." In the lower left-hand corner are the grey rungs of a chair. The assembly of the elements in this

³⁸³ Roger Copeland, *Merce Cunningham: The Modernizing of Modern Dance* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 165.

collage presents an unusual construction and placement of objects in space. Is the violin upright or placed horizontally on the table? Is the chair in front of or on top of the table? How does the bowl of fruit balance precariously on the tilted violin?

Picasso's approach to synthetic collage reevaluated the painterly revisions to perspective that initiated in the late nineteenth century with the work of Édouard Manet. In its creative use of media and blurring of "boundaries between back and front, inner and outer, [and] results in a 'flattening of our perspectival space...'" collage pushed beyond the questioning of perspective in painting at the turn of the twentieth century.³⁸⁴ It deliberately questioned the centuries-old use of single-point perspective to create an *illusion* of depth on a two-dimensional plane. As Copeland aptly reminds, "This is not to imply that collage never takes three-dimensional forms."³⁸⁵ Three-dimensional collage, or assemblage, by artists such as Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, also, does not create an illusion of depth because depth is physically present and literally exists. Instead, collage and assemblage force the spectator into a new position. The audience must "proceed on the implicit assumption that one's own community is *not* the center of the universe, that there are an infinite number of 'other places,' other perspectives, other 'points in space.'"³⁸⁶ There is no invitation into one view of the picture plane because there is no perspectival illusion with which to do so.

³⁸⁴ Ibid, 170.

³⁸⁵ Ibid, 175.

³⁸⁶ Ibid, 170.

5.1.3 The Decentralization of Stage Space

Even taken autonomously, Cunningham's choreography already exhibits characteristics of collage. In bridging balletic movements with those that are commonplace (i.e., running, walking, small tics in the hands and feet), his choreographic act mirrors the physical act of cutting and pasting in collage. Even though Copeland discusses a wide spectrum of Cunningham's oeuvre in his chapter on collage, including works from the 1950s to the 1990s, he fails to take *Summerspace* into consideration. However, the choreographer's intricate use of chance procedures, his unification of classical and pedestrian movements, and his fragmented approach to every detail of these movements, in other words, all the constituents of collage according to Copeland's preferred definition, suggest that *Summerspace* offers one of the most subtle and perhaps Cunningham's subtlest performative manifestations of that genre.³⁸⁷

How does Cunningham's choreography in *Summerspace* demonstrate an approach to perspective similar to that of cubist or surrealist collage? Once again, the viewer is not invited to a perceptual party with a single point of view. In this case, the picture plane is not the two-dimensional canvas but the three-dimensional stage. Jacqueline Lesschaeve devotes an entire section of *The Dancer and The Dance* to Cunningham's discussion of the stage and the audience. In response to her question, "*How do you see contemporary spaces changed?*" Cunningham related the change directly to the new approach to perspective:³⁸⁸

Stages that are on the eighteenth century model are all deeper than they are wide, like that of the Paris Opera. The reason for this is probably that décor was important, as well as the idea of perspective. Classical dancing from Petipa was coming from the back of the stage towards the front, ordinarily on diagonals, but opening out towards the audience. It

³⁸⁷ Copeland calls it "a performative version of collage," 167.

³⁸⁸ Cunningham, *Dancer and the Dance*, 173. Italicization in the text.

was perhaps not originally constructed for dancing, naturally, but you have a sense of distance that way. We have a different idea about space now and a different use of it, wider, but also not just from front to back. Recent stage spaces are almost always wider than they are deep. Your eye can jump from one point to another, you don't have to be led any longer from one point to another.³⁸⁹

The lack of emphasis on one perspective creates a stage space that extends outside of its confines. As in collage, this extension is made possible by a decentralization of the picture, or in the case of dance, stage plane. In both *The Dancer and the Dance* and *Changes*, Cunningham illustrated his points by providing his drawing of the “Space Structure” for *Summerspace*. Twenty-one different colored lines emanate from three numbers on each side of the stage (1, 3, 5 on stage left; 2, 4, 6 on stage right)—all of the possible directional trajectories of movement described earlier in the chapter.³⁹⁰ Although a two-dimensional rendering, this drawing of diagonal and horizontal lines depicts the decentralization of Cunningham’s space-play for the “lyric dance.” No trajectory is emphasized over another, and each line may encounter any point of the stage, as well as any other line, depending on the results of the chance procedures, during a performance. This disorientation is furthered by the pointillistic music and décor; both of which will be discussed shortly. There is no illusion of space to be had. Similar to the decentralization of perspective in cubist and surrealist collage, Cunningham’s approach to movement across space “deemphasizes [the] traditional tendency [of the stage] to kidnap the spectator’s visual focus and force it toward a vanishing point located upstage center in deep space.”³⁹¹ Even though the three-dimensional events on a stage can never be truly equivalent to the elements adhered together in two-dimensional collage, Cunningham treated the stage as a

³⁸⁹ Cunningham, *Dancer and the Dance*, 173.

³⁹⁰ The colored version is in Cunningham, *Changes*, no pagination; in *The Dancer and the Dance* it is a black and white copy, “Figure 6. *Summerspace*: Space Structure.”

³⁹¹ Copeland, 176.

vast surface of movement possibilities, denying the perceiver the illusion of depth. I do not use the word surface in terms of one exterior or outer boundary of choreography. The dancers do not remain restricted to the front of the stage and creep along its edge. Instead I relate it directly to the characteristic of decentralization it shares with two-dimensional collage, wherein the denial of an illusion of space lies in or rather on its surface. It is the surface that catches the eyes and commonly directs a viewer's attention to one focal point. However, in *Summerspace*, the covering of space on stage operates in such a manner as to dissolve the single perspective. The choreography is not a flattening of human bodies to create one surface but a performative collage aesthetic that decentralizes the perspective so that multiple surfaces arise.

By altering the focus of the audience member, Cunningham disrupted the conventional emotional values attributed to the space of the stage. Literature about theater direction, such as Alexander Dean's *Fundamentals of Play Directing* and *Directing for the Stage* by Lloyd Frerer, emphasizes the emotional values, or "tonal qualities" attributed to each area of the stage and movements across the stage. For instance, "down right," a warm area of close and informal intimacy, is the place that most love scenes, informal calls, confessions and gossip should occur.

Cunningham's choreography, on the other hand, as the artist often articulated, does not emote narrative nor does it follow the prescriptive positions of the stage. In her interview with Cunningham, Lesschaeve mentions the challenge this poses for the audience. She states:

I have sometimes observed people looking at your pieces...It is clear that when they see other shows or other choreographies, done on a completely different basis, they are challenged to share in some exploits or built-up emotions. They recognize themselves in it, put themselves in a role, in the classical role of people coming to a show and being spectators, so when they are faced with your pieces, wherever they see them, they just don't know where they are, and so they try to figure out something to think.³⁹²

³⁹² Cunningham, *Dancer and the Dance*, 170.

For Cunningham, the stimulation of thought through anti-narrative choreography and the decentralization of stage space liberates the audience so that "...each spectator is individual, that it isn't a *public*."³⁹³ Because there are simultaneously many points of focus in *Summerspace*, and the viewer is not invited into *one* specific perspective, "Each spectator as an individual can receive what we [Cunningham's troupe] do[es] in his own way and need not see the same thing, or hear the same thing, as the person next to him."³⁹⁴ This conception of dance is amplified when it occurs alongside music and décor: the viewer is free to choose a point of perspective, multiple points of perspective, and/or even no point of perspective. As Cunningham described this multi-mediated situation:

Suppose that even in the dancing I directed something towards something special, the sound would not do the same. It accents in its own way. The visual part might conceivably accent something totally differently, so that what is left for the public is to look at these three things and make something out of it. But, as I say, they have a choice. They can get up and leave. Or they can stay and attempt to make something out of it.³⁹⁵

In this explanation, the individual audience member, like the performers interacting between the score and mobile in Brown's *Calder Piece*, must aurally and visually collage the elements perceived. In his decentralization of stage space, the movements of the dancers and the separation of the choreography from the décor and music, Cunningham extends his aesthetic of collage to include the spectator.

³⁹³ Ibid, 171.

³⁹⁴ Ibid, 172.

³⁹⁵ Ibid, 173.

5.1.4 A Lyric Dance

According to Jill Johnston, the dance critic of the *Village Voice* during the 1960s, who reviewed the ballet in the *Village Voice* in 1960, *Summerspace* was “light and resilient, a ‘lyric dance,’ the program says. It is bounding and spacious with air. And it has the quality of the speckled backdrop and costumes—something like the dappled play of light and shadow caused by the sun when it glints through the leaves.”³⁹⁶ Carolyn Brown has described it as “melodic, lilting, light, ebullient, rhapsodic. *Not* narrative ideas, *not* emotional ideas—but *movement qualities*.”³⁹⁷ These qualities of movement were taken partially from the classical ballet language; they are what Brown refers to as, a “variety of turns—slow turns, fast turns, jumping turns, turns ending in falls, and complex combinations of turns, as well as leaps, jumps, leg extensions, arabesques.”³⁹⁸ She also notes their contrasts. Although “the shapes and combinations of steps look deceptively like classical ballet, the abrupt changes in direction and speed, the rhythmic permutations unrelated to Morton Feldman’s music, the devouring of space using walks, runs, skips, and leaps, and the surprising use of falls to the floor were not at all familiar to ballet dancers...”³⁹⁹

The interpretation of Cunningham’s choreography as performative collage sheds much light on why Cunningham subtitled *Summerspace*, a “Lyric Dance.” The decentralization of space is related not only to a collage aesthetic in the collaborative work, but also to lyric poetry. The nineteenth century witnessed the popular rise of the lyric, which fostered conceptual shifts in

³⁹⁶ Jill Johnston, “Two Reviews (1960, 1963),” in *Merce Cunningham: Dancing in Space and Time*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz ((Chicago, IL: A Capella Books, 1992), 32.

³⁹⁷ Carolyn Brown, “Summerspace: Three Revivals”: 76.

³⁹⁸ Brown, *Chance and Circumstance*, 217.

³⁹⁹ Brown, “Summerspace: Three Revivals”: 74-75.

the genre. It is with this century that the lyric is also most closely identified today; partly as a result of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's differentiation of the lyric from the epic and drama in *Noten und Abhandlungen zum Westöstlichen Divan* (1819) and also because of its introspective turn.⁴⁰⁰ Although Goethe's ternary definition serves as a foundation for the definition of lyric in current literary theory and studies, Werner Wolf the chair of English and Literature at the University of Graz, Austria, expands it in a reconceptualization of the genre. The foundation for his investigation of lyric is divided into yet another ternary structure:

In spite of the dominance of the Goethean generic sense, three existing meanings can be differentiated: a) the narrowest meaning is closest to the origins of the term: the lyric as "a song to be sung", as in the "songs in a musical" (Cuddon 481); b) a less narrow meaning in which 'lyric poetry' is distinguished from "narrative or dramatic verse of any kind" (Cuddon 481), but shares the criterion of versification with these forms of 'poetry', and c) a broad meaning in Goethe's sense, in which the 'lyric' or 'lyric poetry' is opposed to drama and narrative fiction as such (not only to versified dramatic and narrative poetry)...As this variant indicates, 'lyric' has become an umbrella term for most versified literature (except for the epic and verse drama) and has thus become a synonym of 'poetry'.⁴⁰¹

As Wolf examines this tripartite definition may be dissected further according to nine textual criteria, which include:

1. "Potential orality and performativity without dramatic role-playing";⁴⁰²
2. "Shortness: with a view to the majority of poems";⁴⁰³
3. "General deviation from everyday language and discursive conventions resulting in a maximal semanticization of all textual elements";
4. "Versification (acoustic or visual) and general foregrounding of the acoustic potentials of language including rhyme ('musicality') as interrelated special cases of deviation";
5. "Salient self-referentiality and self-reflexivity as another special case of deviation";

⁴⁰⁰ As Werner Wolf highlights: "This ternary differentiation, which can be traced back to Charles Batteux's *Les Beaux-Arts réduits à un même principe* (1746), was subsequently taken up by innumerable scholars all over the world." Werner Wolf, "The Lyric: Problems of Definition and a Proposal for Reconceptualisation," in *Theory Into Poetry: New Approaches to the Lyric*, ed. Eva Müller-Zettelmann and Margarete Rubik, vol. 89, Internationale Forschungen zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 21.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, 23.

⁴⁰² Ibid, 38.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

6. “Existence of one seemingly unmediated consciousness or agency as the centre of the lyric utterance or experience (creating the effect of ‘monologicity’ of lyric discourse)”;
7. “(Emotional) perspectivity and subject rather than object-centredness (emphasis on the individual perception of the lyric agency rather than on perceived objects)”;
8. “Relative unimportance or even lack of external action and (suspenseful) narrative development”;
9. “‘Absoluteness’ of lyric utterances (de-referentialization)”⁴⁰⁴

By no means does every single criterion apply to all examples of lyric. In fact, “apart from textuality and fictionality, there is not a single criterion to be found that fits all texts which could be—and are in fact—called ‘poems’ and that consequently all of these criteria are precarious.”⁴⁰⁵ As a result, Wolf furthers his discussion by highlighting why each criterion may or may not be relevant, especially in regards to the lyric of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Similar to all lyric poetry, *Summerspace* relates to some but not all of these criteria. A brief twenty minutes in duration, the brevity of the dance mirrors the shortness of a lyric. Although dance depends on gesture and not verbal utterance, it is also a performative genre. Furthermore, the aesthetic of Cunningham’s choreography in *Summerspace* may be likened to the lyric in its avoidance of drama. Wolf states that the lyric’s “performativity does not entail dramatic role-playing or acting but resides in the speech act of the reciter.”⁴⁰⁶ Instead of speech acts, it is in Cunningham’s acts of movement that performativity and meaning lie. Thus, as Wolf’s eighth and ninth criteria of lyric poetry underlines, in this dance there is certainly a “lack of external action and (suspenseful) narrative development.” There is some kind of “absoluteness” in Cunningham’s conception, the lyric not of an act of speaking but rather of choreographed movements themselves.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, 39.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 31.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, 24.

The sixth and seventh criteria propose a unique relationship between *Summerspace*, the “lyric dance,” and lyric poetry. In the latter, Wolf claims the domination of one agency referred to as the “lyric I,” a supposedly unmediated consciousness that results from the lack of a narrator, common to the fictional narrative. Who can we view as the “lyric I” in *Summerspace*? How is this agency questioned in the collaboration of *Summerspace*?

Mutlu Blasing, professor of English at Brown University, discusses the “lyric I” as the “lyric subject” in *Lyric Poetry: The Pain and the Pleasure of Words*. Even though the lyric is dependent on text and semantic meaning, Blasing insists that:

The lyric works with the material experience of the somatic production and reproduction of words as sounds and sounds as words, whether spoken, written, or read. Formal schemes that abstract and stylize the distinctive sonic and grammatical shape of a language serve to foreground its material reality and put up an organized resistance to meaning, both as sense and as intention.⁴⁰⁷

Even though “sounds are not without semantic resonances—whether associations specific to a particular poet and/or a given language, or ‘universal’—...their formal system [metrical and syntactical order] operates independently of signification and keeps in constant view the intractably nonsensical, sensory basis and medium of meaning, of sense and intention.”⁴⁰⁸ Thus the formal systems of the individual lines of choreography and eventually the individual modes of media in *Summerspace* operate similarly to the formal systems of lyric poetry. They:

...have a certain autonomy, even an automatism, and appear partly independent of the will of the poet [or the artist, composer, and choreographer]. Sounds recall and call forth other sounds, repeating and reproducing themselves with a kind of impulsion that questions the agency of the speaker—the voice in the poem—if not the poet herself.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ Mutlu Konuk Blasing, *Lyric Poetry: The Pain and the Pleasure of Words* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 27.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, 27.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, 28.

Such a questioning of agency in lyric poetry is an invitation to consider, in similar terms, the decentralization of collage and its translation on stage in a performance of *Summerspace*.

According to Blasing:

The poem does not express some prior intention or meaning; it is an act of intending to mean. The “I” metaleptically tropes the gap words open by choosing words. Because the lyric involves such will and persuasion, because the lyric subject is the rhetorical construct of a voice and depends on an auditor, the “I” is a socially and historically specific formation. If a set of sounds, an acoustic event, must be heard as an intention to mean for there to be an “I”—for sounds to make sense and for sense to be sensible to another—the “I” is utterly dependent on an audience, another or others with the ear to hear this ‘turn,’ which is the event of language itself.⁴¹⁰

Even though the lyrical subject may be heard as an individual voice, this individual does not necessarily exhibit the “emotional perspectivity” of any single author. What has traditionally been referred to as the “lyric you” takes on the persona of the “lyric I.” In Blasing’s multiplication of the lyric subject, lyric poetry closely can be seen as akin to the decentralization of the stage in a performance of *Summerspace*, wherein the perspective is unlimited and audience members are able to exhibit individual points of view. The audience is not simply addressed in order to arouse emotions but given voice precisely because “The very resistance of the material medium to reference instigates a proliferation of possible meanings [and] at the same time...it renders them all speculative.”⁴¹¹

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, 31.

⁴¹¹ Ibid, 28.

5.2 RAUSCHENBERG'S ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONIST POINTILLISM

5.2.1 The Decentralization of Stage Space, Part 2

Cunningham expanded the space of the stage in *Summerspace* by treating the trajectories of movement across the stage equally. No part of the stage or lines of movement were emphasized over another as a result of the chance methods used in order to determine how the directional lines were to cover the space. The expansion of the stage, via choreography, decentralized it, creating an unlimited array of perspective possibilities. This decentralization of perspective, as in cubist and surrealist collage, disregards an illusion of depth in space; which in effect emphasizes surface. Despite an emphasis on surface by way of deliberate deconstruction of the illusion of depth, the choreography remains three-dimensional, extending in both space and time and capitalizing on the dancers' bodies. It is not "flattened"; rather, the point of view is expanded. Similarly, the backdrop and costumes designed by Robert Rauschenberg offer a deconstruction of the illusion of depth through a heightened attention to surface.

Rauschenberg's backdrop for *Summerspace* has been described as pointillist not only by scholars but, also, by the collaborators themselves. In his *Dance Magazine* article on *Summerspace*, Cunningham maintained that for the premiere "...we presented it on a Sunday matinee dressed in the spot-costumes and against the pointillist backdrop by Robert Rauschenberg, and with the music by Morton Feldman."⁴¹² Likewise, Rauschenberg described it as such during a conversation with Feldman, recounted by the composer in an interview with Fred Orton and Gavin Bryars in May 1976, "Bob told me that the set was pointillistic and that he

⁴¹² Cunningham, "Summerspace Story," 54.

would use the same colours to paint the costumes.”⁴¹³ Cunningham Dance Company dancer, Carolyn Brown, who performed in the premiere of *Summerspace*, related the aesthetic of the décor to impressionist pointillism, and, also, described its relation to abstract expressionism:

Unlike Seurat’s, Bob’s colored dots were applied almost randomly, with no attempt made to organize them into realistic forms. The result was a lush, romantic infusion of pointillism, impressionism, and 1950s abstract expressionism.⁴¹⁴

Through a random application of the brown, yellow, orange, pink, blue and green dots, Rauschenberg’s décor and costumes departed from the artist’s then-prevalent neo-dada aesthetic of assemblage manifested in his combines. Instead, as Michelle Potter has argued, his dotted backdrop and costumes for *Summerspace* alluded to his aesthetic of painting from the early ‘50s. By painting the costumes and the backdrop in the same pointillist manner, the painter brought to the forefront the surface of the picture plane. As Potter describes:

....it is likely that, for Rauschenberg, treating the costumes as an extension of the backcloth grew out of his interest in surface. This interest dates back at least to his ‘white paintings’ of the 1950s, some of which were exhibited during *Theatre Piece No. 1* [the collaborative event at Black Mountain College in which Cunningham, John Cage, David Tudor, M.C. Richards, and Charles Olson participated]. With his work *The Lily White* (1950), for example, Rauschenberg etched a series of numbers into the paint, later remarking that they were there ‘as a device to activate the surface.’⁴¹⁵

5.2.2 Greenbergian Surface

Rauschenberg’s attention to the physical surface of the canvas in the early 1950s and in his décor for *Summerspace* can be traced to the influence on him of the art critic, Clement Greenberg. As

⁴¹³ Morton Feldman, interview by Fred Orton and Gavin Bryars, “*Studio International Interview*,” May 27, 1976, in *Morton Feldman Says: Selected interviews and Lectures*, ed. Chris Villars (London: Hyphen Press, 2006), 65.

⁴¹⁴ Brown, *Chance and Circumstance*, 220.

⁴¹⁵ Potter, 9.

the primary champion of abstract expressionism during the middle of the twentieth century, Greenberg explained the aims of painters such as Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock in his seminal essay, “Modernist Painting.” By comparing post-painterly abstraction to the aims of what he calls the “Old Masters,” Greenberg highlights the key similarity between the two groups; they are unified by their attention to flatness. As he articulates, “The Old Masters had sensed that it was necessary to preserve what is called the integrity of the picture plane; that is, to signify the enduring presence of flatness under the most vivid illusion of three-dimensional space.”⁴¹⁶ Paintings by the “Old Masters” make the viewer aware of “what the flatness contains,” or the illusion of three-dimensional space, before “one is made aware of the flatness of their pictures.”⁴¹⁷ Artists such as Pollock and de Kooning reverse the contradiction; that is, “one is made aware of the flatness of their pictures before, instead of after, being made aware of what the flatness contains.”⁴¹⁸ As a result, the illusion of deep space—“the kind of space that recognizable, three-dimensional objects can inhabit”—is no longer the principal concern.⁴¹⁹

Rauschenberg’s décor for *Summerspace* was heavily influenced by the scale and indeterminacy of gestural paintings by the New York School of artists. Like abstract expressionism, the large scale and indeterminate placement of dots reconsidered the illusion of deep space in painting. Rauschenberg’s attention to surface in his pointillist backdrop and costumes for *Summerspace* appears to “flatten” the three-dimensional space of the stage. Unlike the décor of traditional theater, there is no attempt to produce an illusion of deep space that

⁴¹⁶ Clement Greenberg, “Modernist Painting,” in *Art in Theory: 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 756. Original publication: Clement Greenberg, “Modernist Painting,” *Arts Yearbook* 4 (1961).

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

directs the viewer to one perspective. Instead, the sea of dots complements Cunningham's expansion of the stage via the movements of the dancers.⁴²⁰ As Carolyn Brown reflected in an article for *Dance Perspectives* in 1968, "*Summerspace*, in particular of all Merce's works, is antithetical to center stage; the center of interest is everywhere, including the illusion that the dance continues off-stage as well."⁴²¹ The illusion to which Brown refers is *not* the illusion of deep space, which insists on portraying one perspective, but that of expansion. Like Jackson Pollock's canvasses of splattered paint, Rauschenberg's background and costumes for *Summerspace* create an illusion of *infinite* space. As Michelle Potter highlights in her article, "'A License to Do Anything': Robert Rauschenberg and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company":

Rauschenberg's backcloth for *Summerspace*, with its overall pattern of 'pointillist' dots, was also spatially ambiguous. It had no clearly defined center and it appeared to continue beyond the immediately apparent performing space. On stage, the overriding impression it gave was one of vastness.⁴²²

The vast impression of the background accentuates surface, and not an illusion of depth, especially when a dancer ceases to move on stage. Dressed in speckled costumes, which match the dotted backdrop, the still, three-dimensional bodies of the dancers "merge into the background somewhat like a camouflaged animal."⁴²³ At the same time, however, when in motion, the physical movements of the dancers also interrupt the impression of "flatness" the backdrop offers. In these moments, movement activates the surface to reveal actual and real depth on stage. Although there is no illusion of deep space, achieving complete flatness is simply

⁴²⁰ Potter notes a discussion Cunningham had after a rehearsal of *Summerspace* on October 11, 1991 with his Repertory Understudy Group (RUG) in Westbeth, New York City, where he "remarked that he aimed to create a dance that was an exploration of space with no clearly defined center and has commented that when performing *Summerspace* he always felt that he was continuing the dance even when he was offstage (Potter 11).

⁴²¹ Carolyn Brown, "Essays, Stories and remarks about Merce Cunningham," *Dance Perspective* 34 (Summer 1968): 34.

⁴²² Potter, 10-11.

⁴²³ Potter, 9. Cunningham described the dancers in this manner during a discussion that followed his October 11, 1991 rehearsal with his RUG.

not possible, a notion Greenberg articulated in “Modernist Painting.” Despite a shift in the consideration of surface, as a result of acknowledging what flatness contains to acknowledging the actual flatness of the picture plane, Greenberg insists that “the flatness toward which Modernist painting orients itself can never be an absolute flatness” because “the first mark made on a canvas destroys its literal and utter flatness...”⁴²⁴ Paralleling the vibrant Day-Glo paint, Cunningham’s choreography acts as a painterly “mark” made on Rauschenberg’s backdrop and costumes. Movements around the stage, as well as in “a number of small movements of the hands and feet, which fluttered and shimmered,” create a multiplicity of real surfaces in *Summerspace* while simultaneously offering an illusion of expanse that nullifies the illusion of deep space.

5.3 FELDMAN’S SPACES “BETWEEN CATEGORIES”

5.3.1 Indeterminacy in Content

The visual attention to surface on the part of Cunningham and Rauschenberg for *Summerspace* blurs reality and illusion in an optical play of space. Like these two artists, Morton Feldman’s music for *Summerspace* entitled, *Ixion*, also speaks to the notion of surface by way of an aural play between categories, that of time and space.

To determine how the directional lines of movement covered the space of the stage, Cunningham turned to chance operations. He was inspired by the same methods which

⁴²⁴ Greenberg, 758.

incorporated *I-Ching*, used by John Cage during the 1950s. *Ixion*, also, features indeterminacy; however, it is not Cagean in design. Rather, in Feldman's indeterminacy the composer maintains subjective control in the creation of form while allowing the performer some control in the selection of specific musical elements, such as pitch and duration. Feldman's shaping hand distinctly marks his sound events.

Feldman introduced the individuality of his aleatoric music in his essay, "Predeterminate/Indeterminate":

Between 1950 and 1951 four composers—John Cage, Earle Brown, Christian Wolff and myself—became friends, saw each other constantly—and something happened. Joined by the pianist David Tudor, each of us in his own way contributed to a concept of music in which various elements (rhythm, pitch, dynamics, etc.) were decontrolled. Because this music was not 'fixed,' it could not be notated in the old way. Each new thought, each new idea within this thought, suggested its own notation.⁴²⁵

As Feldman describes in this essay, the composers of the so-called New York School each developed "his own way" of approaching indeterminacy; their aleatoric designs were not the same. Because the term was and often is "disastrously misleading in most of the cases to which it is applied"—and especially between members of the New York School of composers—Earle Brown clarified it in regards to his own compositional style and that of Cage and Feldman in his Darmstadt lecture in 1964, "The Notation and Performance of New Music." Beginning with Cage, Brown underlined the use of chance operations, "a rational, lawful, disciplined, system of objectively assembling sound materials."⁴²⁶ According to Brown, Cage "does not, during composing, exert subjective control over the continuity of the sound events" with chance operations. What is controlled are the application of chance operations, as well as the timing and

⁴²⁵ Morton Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, 35. Original publication: Morton Feldman, "Predeterminate/Indeterminate," *Composer* 19 (Spring 1966): 3-4.

⁴²⁶ Earle Brown, "The Notation and Performance of New Music," *Musical Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (1986): 200.

notation. In the music of Cage, “the term ‘chance music’ can be accurately and properly applied.” Even though chance operations involve indeterminacy, Cage ensured that subjective decisions were not left to the discretion of the performer.

Brown, on the other hand, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this study, did not use chance operations. Despite the incorporation of indeterminacy in his music from the 1950s and ‘60s, these compositions do not demonstrate “chance music.” In pieces that are open in form or partially open in form, Brown’s music employs indeterminacy that engages the performer. As Brown explained, “the content is totally composed but left ‘flexible’ and subject to the immediate decisions as to structure and continuity.”⁴²⁷ This is similar but not identical to Feldman’s approach to indeterminacy. Brown discussed this approach in regards to Feldman’s graph music, which was “called that because it was literally written on graph paper; it was not particularly ‘graphic’ in the European sense.”⁴²⁸ He continued:

As I understand it, the structure and attack density in these pieces were very subjectively and painstakingly arrived at by the composer. The actual pitches to be played were, however, left to the performer’s choice; again, one would imagine, a subjective choice. There was also a degree of performer determination as to the actual point of attack of the notes (rhythm) within both the compositional and performance actions but within strict structural limits and the formal outlines are controlled...⁴²⁹

The creation of strict, structural limits can be seen as mirroring indeterminate compositions by Cage. However, unlike Cage, there is “a subjective control rather than the objective or chance control.”⁴³⁰ Feldman’s subjective control differs from that by Brown. Whereas Brown controlled the musical content and left the overall form (or partial form) up to

⁴²⁷ Ibid, 201.

⁴²⁸ Ibid, 200.

⁴²⁹ Ibid, 200-201.

⁴³⁰ Ibid, 201.

the performer in his compositions from the '50s and '60s, Feldman controlled the form and allowed the content to be shaped in part by the performer in his work from that time.

Although it was written eight years after the development of the approach that Brown describes, *Ixion* features the indeterminacy typical of his earlier graph scores. *Ixion* exhibits indeterminacy in pitch, rhythm and duration; however instrumentation, the number of instrumental attacks, dynamics, timbre and register are rather tightly controlled. In his earliest graph pieces, the five *Projections* (1950-1951), Feldman used small squares and rectangles (thought of as prolongations of squares) within larger squares to graphically represent sound events within a partially drawn grid. The placement of these squares and rectangles determines approximate register, and the length of them determines approximate duration. Feldman's graph for *Ixion* is reminiscent of those earlier graphs. Although the exact durations of pitches are determined by the performer (because there are not rectangles, and only squares), when sounds are to be played, a number is provided within a square of the grid, indicating the "number of sounds" that should occur. If no sounds are to be played the square remains, but is left blank. The directions from the 1962 C.F. Peters Edition of the score include such indications:

It is to be played in the high registers of the instruments except for a brief section in which the low registers are indicated. Numbers indicate the amount of sounds to be played on or within the box, each box being equal to 92 MM or thereabouts. The dynamics are low, with an occasional loud sound freely chosen by the performer. If there are too many sounds for the wind or brass instruments to play, articulate as many as possible, and flutter or double-tongue the rest, avoiding glissando. If there are too many single sounds for the piano to play, the remaining sounds are simultaneous. All brass instruments and cells with mutes. Cells and basses should 'mix' pizz and arco.⁴³¹

According to these instructions, Feldman, also, controls a sense of time and tempo with each box equaling approximately 92 MM. However, two versions of the directions exist. In

⁴³¹ Morton Feldman, *Ixion* (New York: C.F. Peters Corporation, 1962).

Cunningham's collaged monograph, *Changes*, the choreographer employs the last page of Feldman's score in a collaged page featuring aspects of *Summerspace*. The score, however, does not incorporate the text of Feldman's directions after the point where he indicated, "If there are too many single sounds for the piano..." Instead, following "avoiding glissando," the directions continue:

The John Cage tempo changes for "Summer Space" which follow may be used as an alternative to the tempo given here. Moderato; V² Slower; I⁴ Moderato; I⁵ Slower; V⁵ Faster; IV⁶ Slower on second measure; V⁶ Lento at second measure at 'low'; III⁷ Slightly faster than 'high'; II⁸ Fast; V⁹ Faster; III¹² Suddenly; II¹³ Accelerando on second measure; and, III¹³ Fast to end.⁴³²

Cunningham includes the citation, "© 1962 by c.f. peters corporation, n.y."—the same information printed in the bound version of the score by C.F. Peters. According to Mats Persson in the CD jacket for *Morton Feldman: Complete Works for Two Pianists*, "John Cage worked out a re-modified version of the tempo scheme for *Ixion*, perhaps because of the huge difficulties it imposed upon the musicians."⁴³³ Because Feldman created his score separately from Cunningham's choreography, the discrepancy of tempo might have also been related to matching the duration of the music with the length of the choreography. This meant they ran out of music or did not finish the music before the choreography ended.

In addition, Feldman created a four-hand piano version of the score for the purposes of touring the piece with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. As David Vaughan indicates, "...live music had usually been played on piano, by Cage and/or Tudor...; occasionally, works like *Summerspace* and *Springweather and People* had been played in their orchestral versions."⁴³⁴

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Mats Persson, "Liner Notes," in *Morton Feldman – Complete Works for Two Pianists*, Kristine Scholz and Mats Persson, Alice Records, ALCD 024.

⁴³⁴ Vaughan, 127.

Whether for orchestra including piano or just piano, Feldman maintained strong control of *timbre* and *texture* in *Ixion* while releasing choices of pitch, rhythm, and duration. By doing so, Feldman balanced indeterminacy with the organization of timbre, texture and to an extent, register.

5.3.2 The Visual and Musical Grid

In her groundbreaking dissertation, “In No Uncertain Musical Terms: The Cultural Politics of John Cage’s Indeterminacy,” Rebecca Kim examines the importance of the grid in indeterminate music of the New York School, as related to the importance of the grid in twentieth-century visual art. Kim points to the theories of art historian and critic, Rosalind Kraus. According to Kraus:

If we open any tract...we will find that Mondrian and Malevich are not discussing canvas or pigment or graphite or any other form of matter. They are talking about Being or Mind or Spirit. From their point of view, the grid is a staircase to the Universal, and they are not interested in what happens below in the Concrete.⁴³⁵

By using Kraus’s theory of the grid as “a conceptual framework for the musical grid,” Kim argues that the experimental notation of the New York School is more than just ink on a page: “in musical discussions of the grid, Cage, Feldman, Brown, and Wolff were not merely interested in its ‘exclusive visuality’ but rather the potential of this structure to lead the musician beyond the page.”⁴³⁶ Kim defends Cage and his “School” primarily against Pierre Boulez. After viewing Feldman’s *Intersections* “in late 1951, [Boulez] recognized immediately the visual trope of its gridded exterior but failed to prevaricate beyond surface: ‘[the scores] let themselves go

⁴³⁵ Rebecca Y. Kim, “In No Uncertain Musical Terms: The Cultural Politics of John Cage’s Indeterminacy,” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2008), 82.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

dangerously to the *seduction of the graphism alone*. Now, we are musicians and not painters, and pictures are not made to be performed.”⁴³⁷ In an indirect response to Boulez in his 1958 article,

“Sound, Noise, Varèse, Boulez,” Feldman explains his graph music:

If one hears what one composes—by that I mean not just paper music—how can one not be seduced by the sensuality of the musical sound? It is unfortunate that when this sensuality is pursued we find that the world of music is not round, and that there do exist demonic vastnesses when this world leaves off.⁴³⁸

When Feldman incorporates the grid on the paper, he does so purposefully, to create a *sound* world, not a visual one, which emphasizes and embraces this *vastness*. Kim continues to defend the function of the music grid through Kraus, who “...conceives of the grid’s lateral spread as a tension between *centrifugal* and *centripetal* forces.” As Kim explains:

If viewed centrifugally, the grid is a “dematerialization of the surface” and “operates from the work of art outward, compelling our acknowledgement of a world beyond the frame.” If read centripetally, the grid gathers force from within its frame, “from the outer limits of the aesthetic object inward....a *re*-presentation of everything that separates the work of art from the world, from ambient space and from other objects. The grid is an introjection of the boundaries of the world into the interior of the work; it is a mapping of the space inside the frame onto itself.”⁴³⁹

In this theory of the grid “surface” pertains particularly to that of the visual plane. Kim, focusing mainly on the works of John Cage, does not explore how Kraus’s conceptualization of the grid’s surface relates to Feldman’s conceptualization of surface as an aural plane, what is “beyond the page.” As I have discussed throughout this chapter, the choreography and décor for *Summerspace* not only investigate space, but they call attention to the reality and the illusion of surfaces of the visual plane. The interaction of these surfaces is similar to but not the same as the

⁴³⁷ Pierre Boulez, to John Cage, December 1951 in *The Boulez-Cage Correspondence*, ed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez and trans. Robert Samuels (New York: Cambridge University, 1993), 116-117. Quoted in Kim, 84.

⁴³⁸ Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, 1. Original publication: Morton Feldman, “Sound, Noise, Varèse, Boulez,” *It Is: A Magazine for Abstract Art*, no.2 (Autumn 1958): 46.

⁴³⁹ Rosalind Krauss, “Grids,” *October* 9 (Summer 1979): 58-64. Quoted in Kim, 87.

tension Kraus highlights between the centripetal and centrifugal forces in relation to the frame. Whereas Cunningham's choreography and Rauschenberg's décor explore decentralization of stage space, *Ixion* expands sound events beyond the frame of a visual grid in order to offer a vast aural plane.

5.3.3 Feldman's Surfaces

Feldman discussed his perspective on surface in the well-known essay, "Between Categories." He states, "Music, as well as painting, has its subject as well as its surface. It appears to me that the subject of music, from Machaut to Boulez, has always been its construction."⁴⁴⁰ Unlike these figures, Feldman's "obsession with surface is the subject of [his] music."⁴⁴¹ In search of a definition of what "the surface aural plane of music is," Feldman conversed about it with his friend Brian O'Doherty. He related the telephone conversation in "Between Categories," an essay published in 1969:

"Brian," I asked, "what is the surface of music I'm always talking to you about? How would you define or describe it?"...Not being a composer—not knowing that much about music, he was hesitant to answer. After a little coaxing he came up with the following thought:

"The composer's surface is an *illusion* into which he puts something real—sound. The painter's surface is something *real* from which he then creates an illusion." With such excellent results, I had to continue. "Brian—would you now please differentiate," I said, "between a music that has a surface and a music that doesn't."

⁴⁴⁰ Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, 83. Original publication: Morton Feldman, "Between Categories," *The Composer* 1, no. 2 (September 1969): 73-77. Also in *Mundus Artium: A Journal of International Literature and the Arts* 6, no.1 (1973): 94-98.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

“A music that has a surface *constructs* with time. A music that doesn’t have a surface *submits* to time and becomes a rhythmic progression.”⁴⁴²

Feldman agreed with O’Doherty, except for his explanation of “constructing” with time. Instead of considering time as an element in the construction of music which mirrors the subject of music “from Machaut to Boulez,” Feldman felt “that the idea is more to let Time be....Time simply must be left alone.”⁴⁴³ By leaving time alone, other elements of the music—timbre, pitch, register—emerge as Feldman’s subject; those elements construct the surface. As a result, Feldman preferred to call his compositions, “time canvases, in which [he] more or less prime[s] the canvas with an overall hue of the music.”⁴⁴⁴

The essay, “Between Categories” was not the first time Feldman referred to the “illusion” of music. In his research, Brett Boutwell employs one of Feldman’s sketchbooks from the early 1950s, “Sketchbook 3.” While discussing the unusual *notational* space of *Intermission 6* Boutwell explains:

Significantly, in *Intermission 6* he had experimented for the first time with a format in which musical time was not made to conform to horizontal notation space. As a result, the score itself cannot function as a linear guide for the listener’s temporal journey through the piece, as is the case in conventionally-notated music and in Feldman’s graph works.⁴⁴⁵

Feldman notes in this sketchbook that “space in music is an illusion. Only the happening in time is real.”⁴⁴⁶ Boutwell reads this quote in relation to the space of the score; the score is an illusion to “real” sounds that require time to pass. Almost twenty years after Feldman’s statement in his sketchbook, however, Feldman mentioned O’Doherty’s explanation of the composer’s

⁴⁴² Ibid, 85.

⁴⁴³ Ibid, 85.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, 88.

⁴⁴⁵ Boutwell, 163.

⁴⁴⁶ Morton Feldman, Sketchbook 3 (ca. 1950-1953), PSS, Basel. Quoted in Boutwell, 163.

surface as “an *illusion* into which he puts something real—sound.” Is the “illusion” to which O’Doherty refers the same as Feldman’s “illusion” noted in his sketchbook from the early 1950s?

I insist on a difference between the two. Although O’Doherty’s surface could refer to the actual space of the score, the illusion of the grid as a surface which signifies “real sounds,” I argue that this illusion is an extension beyond the score. There is another illusion, an intangible aural space comprised of the occurrence of “real sounds.” The latter must unfold in time; however the former always exists in time. Feldman’s conception of surface is therefore caught in between illusion and reality, space and time, and occurrence and signification. What results are multiple surfaces.

According to his argument about *Intermission 6*, Boutwell believes that Feldman’s graph works may be compared to his conventionally notated music because both provide a “linear guide for the listener’s temporal journey.” This linearity, however, is compromised by the elusive position of Feldman’s music *in between* categories; and by that “I mean not just paper music.” His approach to indeterminacy only furthers this position of “inbetweenness.” By controlling the form but allowing indeterminacy of musical content, Feldman’s music is also caught in between the subjectivity of the composer and that of the performer. His graph scores, and *Ixion*, in particular, demonstrate not linearity but multiplicity—a canvas which collages time, space, illusion and reality and exhibits multiple surfaces that depend on the moment of performance. By insisting on this “inbetweenness,” Feldman’s musical collage for Cunningham’s *Summerspace* portrays an aural sense of limitlessness that parallels Cunningham’s and Rauschenberg’s extension and decentralization of stage space. When performed in conjunction with Cunningham’s choreography and Rauschenberg’s décor for

Summerspace, the collaboration also exists: “...*between categories*. Between Time and Space. Between painting and music...”⁴⁴⁷

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

This consideration of time, space and surface(s) mirrors the play between illusion and reality in the visual surfaces of *Summerspace*. Both the visual elements and music extend the viewers visual and aural points of view beyond one single optical or listening experience. When combined, these artists immerse the audience, as individuals, in a field of possibility. Not only are there indeterminate aspects in the creation of each medium itself but there is also indeterminacy in each viewer’s collective perception of the media during a performance, the collage of the “lyrical I.” This would not be possible if music, choreography and visual art did not each exhibit vastness through their individual means.

So what did the “I’s” of the audience see? Reviews of the premiere are scarce, brief in description, and unimpressed with the performance. In the *Dance Observer*, Louis Horst summarized it in one sentence, “Merce Cunningham’s *Summerspace*, receiving its premiere on this occasion, unfortunately did not, to this observer, realize any of the high standards so patently evident in his three works presented earlier in the week.”⁴⁴⁸ Cunningham reflected on such a curt view of *Summerspace* in his interview with Lesschaeve:

⁴⁴⁷ Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, 88.

⁴⁴⁸ Louis Horst, “Eleventh American Dance Festival,” *Dance Observer*, 25 (August-September 1958): 102.

When it was first done, at the Summer School in Connecticut, nobody saw the dance, nobody heard the music. It simply passed. There it was going on, among all those modern dances, its turn came and we performed it. Nobody saw it.⁴⁴⁹

Of course, when Cunningham stated that “nobody saw it,” he did not mean that no one was in attendance. In his *Dance Magazine* article, the choreographer concludes by remarking simply, “the audience was puzzled.”⁴⁵⁰ The audience watched the performance, but the spectators did not comprehend its collaged design. Nevertheless, despite the lack of appreciation, the performance definitely created the effects of decentralization that the choreographer and his collaborators desired. As P.W. Manchester criticized in a 1960 performance of *Summerspace*: the choreography “straggle[s] all over the stage with no beginning, no middle and no end.”⁴⁵¹ Such critics detected the lack of narrative in *Summerspace* but did not analyze the collaged design.

According to the MCDC archivist, David Vaughan, despite its reviews of the premiere in Connecticut and its 1960 performance at the Phoenix Theatre in New York, *Summerspace* continued to be performed by the MCDC and eventually by other companies:

It was given frequently in 1964 and 1965, however, especially during the 1964 world tour. Cunningham then gave it a ten-year hiatus with his own company, during which it was revived elsewhere—by New York City Ballet, the Cullbergbaletten in Stockholm, and the Boston Ballet. It was also revived in 1976 by the French company theater du Silence. Its last performance by the Cunningham company, at present writing, was in the fall of 1979.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ Cunningham, *Dancer and the Dance*, 132.

⁴⁵⁰ Cunningham, “Summerspace Story,” 54.

⁴⁵¹ P.W. Manchester, “Merce Cunningham and Dance Co.,” *Dance News* 36, no. 3 (March 1960): 11.

⁴⁵² Vaughan, 112. David Vaughan lists the complete chronology of performance: “**FP** MCDC, Eleventh American Dance Festival, Connecticut College, New London CT 17 August 1958; Phoenix Theater, New York NY 16 February 1960; **NP** New York City Ballet; revised for classic ballet **D** Anthony Blum, Kay Mazzo, Patricia Neary, Sara Leland, Carol Sumner, Deni Lamont **FP** New York State Theater, New York NY 14 April 1966; **ST** Cullbergbaletten, under the Swedish title *Sommarrymd* **FP** Stradsteatern, Stockholm, Sweden 22 October 1967 **ST** The Boston Ballet **FP** Music Hall Boston MA 7 November 1974; **ST** Théâtre du Silence **FP** Salle des Sports, La Rochelle, France 29 October 1976; Beacon Theatre, New York NY 21 March 1978.

The 1966 performance of *Summerspace* by the New York City Ballet garnered positive attention that grasped Cunningham's original intentions even though the choreography differed slightly from that of the premiere. The movements of the choreography across the space of the stage remained the same; however Cunningham altered some of the footwork in order to translate the dance for women who were en pointe. Of the NYC Ballet premiere, Doris Hering claimed in *Dance Magazine*:

Here indeed does Lincoln Kirstein's [the general director of the NYC Ballet] 'poetry of space come alive.' But it comes alive not so much in the measure of time as *beyond* the measure of time. Five dancers costumed so that they blend into the color-spattered backdrop by Robert Rauschenberg, appear, disappear, join, separate, pause, leap, crouch, balance.⁴⁵³

Hering aptly highlighted the extension of space on the part of the choreography. Likewise, Joseph Gale appreciated the seamless continuity formed by the combination of the choreography and Rauschenberg's décor:

Against this nervous background, the dancers whirl, spin, slide, shift, posture, kick and patter in unending and seemingly unrelated patterns scarcely touching or noticing one another. Yet the movements have continuity and cohesion.⁴⁵⁴

In his *New York Herald-Tribune* review of the 1966 performance, Walter Terry called the ballet version of *Summerspace* a "near-loser." Comparing the NYC Ballet performance to the MCDC version of the early 1960s, Terry found many problems with the former. His primary concern regarded a loss of lyricism:

Mr. Cunningham, in his modern dance creation, devised a lyric dance. The lyricism flowed through the dancers' bodies, through torsos uninhibited by the traditional rules of deportment. Even when there was a pause, it was a matter of arrested motion—the pulse

⁴⁵³ Doris Hering, "'The Poetry of Space': New York City Ballet's Spring Season," *Dance Magazine* 40, no. 7: 50. Hering does take issue with Cunningham's decision to put the females on pointe. She states: "In transposing *Summerspace* to the New York City Ballet, Mr. Cunningham put the girls on pointe. I did not find this an improvement, and often the sound of the toe shoes rose above the small-voiced accompaniment" (50).

⁴⁵⁴ Joseph Gale, "Summerspace in New York Bow," *Newark News*, April 15, 1966.

was still there. With ballet dancers, ‘Summerspace’ became a matter of steps into inaction, into stoppings. Lyricism disappeared.⁴⁵⁵

Terry’s critique demonstrates a viewer who did “see” and comprehend the lyrical and collaged spaces in the original version of *Summerspace*.

In these reviews the choreography is outlined separately from the music and décor; the music is briefly mentioned separately from the décor and choreography; and the décor is described separately from the choreography and music. However, some critics also pointed out their seamless fit when combined. Whether considered individually or in combination, meaning relates directly to the medium itself. The music, décor, choreography, and their combinations intentionally invite the individual viewer, by way of collage and multitudinous surfaces, to perceive *Summerspace* from an unlimited number of perspectives. These perspectives may even wander offstage expanding visually and aurally.

The artistic reconsiderations of surface in *Summerspace* demonstrate performative collage that reconsiders surface in music, choreography and painting. In his exploration of Cunningham’s performative collage, Roger Copeland makes a distinction between *Gesamtkunstwerk* and collage:

If the Wagnerian ideal of artistic synthesis models itself on the presumed unity of the natural world, then collage corresponds to the deep disjunctive structures of the contemporary city. Certainly, if we conceive of collage as nothing more than an exercise in pasting, gluing, and juxtaposition, then we can find examples of it in virtually every culture, time-period, and context...But in the context of modernism, collage and its three-dimensional counterpart, assemblage, are both closely associated with the sharp disjunctions and peculiar juxtapositions of twentieth-century urban experience.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁵ Walter Terry, “‘Summerspace’: Winner Almost Loser,” *New York Herald Tribune*, Friday, April 15, 1966.

⁴⁵⁶ Copeland, 167-168.

Even though *Summerspace* exemplifies Copeland's characteristics of performative collage, he never mentions it. This dismissal results from the precarious position *Summerspace* inhabits. Although the choreography, décor and music were created separately—and each mode of media features aspects of collage in its own right—during a performance they combine, a collage cubed. The event welcomes the tension between disjuncture *and* collation. Instead of segregating the “unity of the natural world” from the “disjunctive structures” of the urban city, *Summerspace* positions the two simultaneously, dissolving the binary. Not only are the spaces of society questioned, as in collage, but a proposal to consider them anew is offered in the multitudinous surfaces of the collaboration. Through, in and on these surfaces, every spectator is invited to view the work individually and together, from any perspective desired. Meaning is therefore found in the modes of media themselves: how they were created, questioned, performed, and unified. Cunningham recounted the social significance of this aesthetic—one that reverberates in the music by Feldman and décor by Rauschenberg in *Summerspace*—in his interview with Lesschaeve:

In the States in the '60s, and late '50s, there were a great many young people who began to question the old structures that we learned at school: there must be other possibilities, so you begin to wonder what those other possibilities are. Since we know that the way society is constructed is not working, at least nowadays, then obviously there must be other ways, other possibilities to think of. In the meantime, I'm going along dancing, teaching, traveling, to keep doing whatever I'm doing: but all these ideas enter into the way I work. I began to see that dancing could as well be done another way; it makes perfectly good sense, it does not have to go only in one direction; it could go differently, and why not?⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁷ Cunningham, *Dancer and the Dance*, 170.

6.0 EPILOGUE

6.1 AESTHETICS AND POLITICS: CHALLENGING MAINSTREAM GROUNDS OF COMMUNICATION

The events of my case studies demonstrate similar modes of questioning mainstream grounds of communication in the 1960s; common methods with which Americans made statements to address political, social and cultural regimes of truth. Unlike established modes of protest, the avant-garde composers of the New York School, and the artists with whom they collaborated made use of indeterminate relations and collage in collaborations which also reevaluated what it meant to be socially active at the time. In *Variations V*, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Stan VanDerBeek and the rest of the artists who produced the premiere performance of the collaboration incorporated recognizable sounds, images and gestures which paralleled cultural, political and cultural concerns emphasized by mass media. However, to grasp merely the politics of representation in the arrangement of sights and sounds during any moment of performance, is to miss the point. Through a play of indeterminate and (pre)determined relations between collaborators (and also within some individual collaborator's contributions) potentiality fosters a *movement* of signification in *Variations V*, comparable to the Derridean sheaf of difference. The slippage of difference undermines representational hierarchies that are always already by allowing for any number of ecological, political or technological statements to occur.

Unlike *Variations V*, whose technological model mirrored mainstream grounds of communication such as television, radio and popular music records, the mode of questioning in *Calder Piece* is more subdued. Not only does it involve a smaller group of collaborators, but also a more traditional instrumental palette. Within this collaboration, however, there is an intricate feedback condition, or rather feedback conditions, that allow for performers and even an inanimate, animate object to partially influence the course of events. In its unique conception of musical media and mobility, *Calder Piece* interacts with Bergsonian notions of willed and automatic order via different types of collage. Through Brown's textual method of collage, *Calder Piece* relates directly in feedback to the composer's *String Quartet*. However, in the perceptual collage in the minds of the performers, there is also feedback between image, memory and perception in *Calder Piece*. Brown's interest in what he called the "human performance potential" and his unique marriage of form and mobility, in the collages of *Calder Piece*, questioned (and also question) preconceived notions of order—fixed ideas that also permeated (and continue to permeate) society. There is movement in and between the multiple layers of collage which inform the feedback conditions of *Calder Piece*. The event is comprised of, as Bergson states in *Creative Mind*, "several orders, several existences, and, in addition a play of wit which unconsciously juggles with them." Through this juggling act, *Calder Piece* ultimately addresses the ease with which order—that which the audience expects, and not percussive sounds of supposed disorder—is automatically accepted in society.

Similar to the collaborative method in *Variations V*, *Summerspace* also features a convergence of media which negotiates varying levels of indeterminacy alongside pre-determined actions. Even though the two events share a choreographer, Merce Cunningham, *Summerspace* involves music that occurs independently from any technological activation on the

part of movement by the dancers. Through this egalitarian coexistence of media, *Summerspace* also questions mainstream modes of communication and accepted societal or cultural hierarchies. Music, décor, and choreography work to extend the viewer's perspective beyond one single optical or listening experience by redefining surface as the new "depth." For Cunningham, this involves a collage aesthetic; for Rauschenberg, pointillist décor that combines with abstract expressionism; and for Feldman musical sounds *in between* space and time. Although each collaborator's contribution decentralizes visual and aural spaces of the stage individually, in tandem, *Summerspace* transforms into a collage of the "lyrical I." Indeterminate aspects in the creation of each medium itself, as well as in each viewer's collective perception of the media create a performance of collage, cubed. The event welcomes the tension between disjuncture *and* collation. Instead of segregating the "unity of the natural world" and the "disjunctive structures" of the urban city, *Summerspace* positions the two simultaneously, dissolving the binary. Not only are the spaces of society questioned (as in collage), but a proposal to consider them anew is offered in the multitudinous surfaces of the collaboration. Through, in and on these surfaces, every spectator is invited to view the work individually and together, from any perspective desired. Meaning is therefore found in the modes of media themselves: how they were created, questioned, performed, and unified.

6.2 CHALLENGING THE MODERNISM/POSTMODERNISM BINARY

In "The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism," his chapter in the monograph, *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*, Jonathan Kramer claims that there is "a blurring of

rigid distinctions among modernism, postmodernism, and antimodernism, resulting in the term ‘postmodernism’ resisting rigorous definition.”⁴⁵⁸ He attributes this vagueness towards perspectives on “unity, intertextuality, and eclecticism.”⁴⁵⁹ Despite this assertion, however, he also lists sixteen characteristics of postmodern music. Postmodern music:

1. Is not simply a repudiation of modernism or its continuation, but has aspects of both a break and an extension;
2. Is, on some level and in some way, ironic;
3. Does not respect boundaries between sonorities and procedures of the past and of the present;
4. Challenges barriers between ‘high’ and ‘low’ styles’
5. Shows disdain for the often
6. Questions the mutual exclusivity of elitist and populist values
7. Avoids totalizing forms (e.g., does not want entire pieces to be tonal or serial or cast in a prescribed formal mold);
8. Considers music not as autonomous but as relevant to cultural, social, and political contexts;
9. Includes quotations of or references to music of many traditions and cultures;
10. Considers technology not only as a way to preserve and transmit music but also as deeply implicated in the production and essence of music;
11. Embraces contradictions;
12. Distrusts binary oppositions;
13. Includes fragmentations and discontinuities;
14. Encompasses pluralism and eclecticism;
15. Presents multiple meanings and multiple temporalities;
16. Locates meaning and even structures in listeners, more than in scores, performances, or composers.⁴⁶⁰

In this list, Kramer maintains that postmodern music both breaks and extends characteristics of modernism. Thus, although he does not provide characteristics of modernism, Kramer implies a finite attitude towards modernist music. He demonstrates this in his chapter for *Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz since 1945*, in his discussion of the Cagean avant-garde. Although these composers may have come close to breaking with modernism, their tendency

⁴⁵⁸ Jonathan Kramer, “The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism,” in *Postmodern Music: Postmodern Thought*, ed. Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner (New York: Routledge, 2002), 16.

⁴⁵⁹ See Kramer’s discussion in “Nature and Origins,” 14-16.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, 16-17.

towards textual unity was, as Kramer concludes, “finally more modernist than postmodernist.”⁴⁶¹ As a result, Kramer appears to advocate for the vague embrace of the modernist-postmodernism divide; however, he continues to solidify the art-historical boundary.

Variations V, *Calder Piece* and *Summerspace* challenge this boundary by underlining the tension between notions of modern and postmodern music. Performances of these pieces should not be considered as either modern or postmodern. Instead, each event in its own way exhibits some, but not all, of Kramer’s postmodern characteristics. They are simultaneously modern and postmodern; and, in this simultaneity, *neither* modern *nor* postmodern.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, 31.

APPENDIX A

TABLES: MERCE CUNNINGHAM'S CHOREOGRAPHY

Table A- 1 Chart of Correlations between three of Cunningham's outlines (Tables 2-4 in Appendix A) detailing the order of choreographic events. Reproduced from his personal notes. Merce Cunningham, *Choreographic Notes for Variations V*, 1965, Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archives, New York.

1	1'	Enter	Bring in things	
1		Enter	3'	
1	Enter			1'

2	2'	MC/ 1 ½ (CB)	PS/1 ½ SN/repeat	BL (on head) (CB) (GS & AR)
2		MC/ 1 ½'		
2	MC/ 1 ½ (CB)	PS/ 1 ½ SN/ 1 ½ AR/1 ½	BL (on head GS	2'

3	4'	Crawling BL/SN/AR/GS/PS	CB/or exit (change dress)	MC (avocado)
3		Boys Dance & Falling	3'	
3	Boys Dance MC begins GS/AR/PS & Falling Girls (CB exit)	CB 1 ½	MC/plant CB (change out of dress)	2 {?}'

Table A- 1 (continued).

4	4'	CB/solo	Yg/ 1 ½ AR/1 ½ BL/ 1 ½	MC (yoga pad) Or blanket (PS) (SN)
4		CB/Solo	4'	
4	CB/Solo	GS/ 1 ½ AR/ 1 ½ BL/ 1 ½	SN(in dress) + boys/roll	4'
5	1'	Leaping BL/SN/AR/GS/PS/CB (or air)(or avocado)	MC/ repetition	
5		Leaping	1	
5	Leaping	MC/ . /.		1:45
6	3'	MC & BL/duet	SN/1 ½ PS/rep. or {on?} 1 ½	CB (avocado) (GS) (AR)
6		MC & BL/Duet	3'	
6	MC & BL/Duet	CB change into dress	CB (plant)	3'
7	2'	Huddles & Swings (flashlights)	(repeats here)	
7		Crawling	4'	
7	Crawling		MC/blanket or pad	4'
8	3'	CB/trio (GS & AR)		BL & SL (dress) PD & MC (table)
8		CB/trio	3'	
8	CB/trio (GS & AR)		B L & SN (dress) PS & MC (table)	3'
9	1'	Aerial sweeps		
9		Aerial sweeps	1'	
9	Aerial sweeps	Everyone Change		1:45
10	2'	Boys Dance & Falling (GS/AR/PS BL/SN)	CB/ 1 ½	MC (avocado & Bicycle & Exit)
10		Huddles	2'	
10	Huddles & swings	In clothes	MC plant & bicycle {mispelled}	2'
11	4'	MC/Solo	Games/chase & exit	
11		MC/Solo	chase	4'
11	MC/solo	Rope; chase (& exit)		4'

Table A- 2 An outline by Cunningham detailing the order of choreographic events for *Variations V*. Reproduced from his personal notes. Merce Cunningham, Choreographic Notes for *Variations V*, 1965, Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archives, New York.

Event #	Time (in minutes)	Gesture/Assigned Dancer	Gesture/Assigned Dancer	Gesture/Assigned Dancer
1	7'	Enter	Bring in things	
2	2'	MC/ 1 ½ (CB)	PS/1 ½ SN/repeat	BL (on head) (CB) (GS & AR)
3	4'	Crawling BL/SN/AR/GS/PS	CB/or exit (change dress)	MC (avocado)
4	4'	CB/solo	Yg/ 1 ½ AR/1 ½ BL/ 1 ½	MC (yoga pad) Or blanket (PS) (SN)
5	7'	Leaping BL/SN/AR/GS/PS/CB (or air)(or avocado)	MC/ repetition	
6	3'	MC & BL/duet	SN/1 ½ PS/rep. or {on?} 1 ½	CB (avocado) (GS) (AR)
7	2'	Huddles & Swings (flashlights)	(repeats here)	
8	3'	CB/trio (GS & AR)		BL & SL (dress) PD & MC (table)
9	7'	Aerial sweeps		
10	2'	Boys Dance & Falling (GS/AR/PS BL/SN)	CB/ 1 ½	MC (avocado & Bicycle& Exit)
11	4'	MC/Solo	Games/chase & exit	

Table A- 3 A second outline by Cunningham detailing the order of choreographic events for *Variations V*. Reproduced from his personal notes. Merce Cunningham, Choreographic Notes for *Variations V*, 1965, Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archives, New York.

Event #	Action/Assigned Dancer	Time in Minutes
1	Enter	3
2	MC/ 1 ½	
3	Boys Dance & Falling	3
4	CB/Solo	4
5	Leaping	1
6	MC & BL/Duet	3
7	Crawling	4
8	CB/trio	3
9	Aerial sweeps	1
10	Huddles	2
11	MC/Solo chase	4

Table A- 4 A third outline by Cunningham detailing the order of choreographic events for *Variations V*. Reproduced from his personal notes. Merce Cunningham, Choreographic Notes for *Variations V*, 1965, Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archives, New York.

Event #	Action/Assigned Dancer	Dancer/Time in Minutes	Dancer/Action	Time in Minutes
1	Enter			1
2	MC/ 1 ½ (CB)	PS/ 1 ½ SN/ 1 ½ AR/1 ½	BL (on head GS	2
3	Boys Dance MC begins GS/AR/PS & Falling Girls (CB exit)	CB 1 ½	MC/plant CB (change out of dress)	2 {?}
4	CB/Solo	GS/ 1 ½ AR/ 1 ½ BL/ 1 ½	SN(in dress) + boys/roll	4
5	Leaping	MC/ . /.		1:45
6	MC & BL/Duet	CB change into dress	CB (plant)	3
7	Crawling		MC/blanket or pad	4
8	CB/trio (GS & AR)		B L & SN (dress) PS & MC (table)	3'
9	Aerial sweeps	Everyone Change		1:45
10	Huddles & swings	In clothes	MC pland & bycycle	2'
11	MC/solo	Rope; chase (& exit)		4'

Table A- 5 Outline by Cunningham detailing the order of choreographic events for *Variations V*. Reproduced from his personal notes. Merce Cunningham, Choreographic Notes for *Variations V*, 1965, Merce Cunningham Dance Company Archives, New York.

<p>1. <BEGIN PIECE WITH DANCE OF ACROBATIC NATURE: TUMBLING (DANCE), A NUMBER JUMPS OF CONSTELLATIONS LIFTS & THROWS ETC FAST CRAWLS [DECIDED BY 'HUDDLES' (FOOTBALL)] { IF POSSIBLE ONTO MESS OF WIRES [FOR SOUND]}</p> <p>3'</p>
<p>2. 3 BOYS [OR 2] WITH GIRLS ONTOP [CRAWLING [OVERWIRES FOR SOUND]]</p> <p>4'</p>

Table A- 5 (continued).

3. TRIO: 2 BOYS & VF/OR SN [JAPANESE....?] DANCE	3'
4. CB [SOLO] DANCE	3'
5. BL & MC [DUET] LOOSE DANCE	4'
6. MC [SOLO] AIR & _____ & SHRUG SHOULD & MOUTH UNDRESS	4'
7. AERIAL SPACES & SCENES [EVERYONE]; CIRCUS	7'
8. CHASE: [EVERYONE] GAMES	3'
9. AERIAL SPINS MC & ? CIRCUS	7'
10, JIGS IN CORNERS [EVERYONE]	3'
11. DUMMY & ROBOT CIRCUS	7'

APPENDIX B

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL: THE EARLE BROWN MUSIC FOUNDATION

The material in Appendix B has been reprinted with the permission of The Earle Brown Music Foundation in Rye, New York.

"Time and Free Will"
Bergson

Pg. 11 (aesthetic feelings)

Let us consider the....feeling of grace. At first it is only the perception of a certain ease, a certain facility in the outward movements.we are led to find a superior ease in the movements which can be foreseen, in the present attitudes in which future attitudes are pointed out, as it were, pre-figured. If jerky movements are wanting in grace, the reason is that each of them is self-sufficient and does not announce those which are to follow. If curves are more graceful than broken lines, the reason is that, while a curved line changes its direction at every moment, every new direction is indicated in the preceding one. Thus the perception of ease in motion passes over into the pleasure of mastering the flow of time and of holding the future in the present. A third element comes in when the graceful movements submit to a rhythm and are accomp. by music. For the rhythm and measure, by allowing us to foresee to a still greater extent the movements of the dancer, make us believe that we now control them....the regularity of the rhythm establishes a kind of communication between him and us, and the periodic returns of the measure are like so many invisible threads by means of which we set in motion this imaginary puppet. etc.....

pg. 14

But we might ask ourselves whether nature is beautiful otherwise than thru meeting by chance certain processes of our art, and whether, in a certain sense, art is not prior to nature. Without even going so far, it seems more in conformity with the rules of a sound method to study the beautiful first in the works in which it has been produced by a conscious effort, and then to pass on by imperceptible steps from art to nature, which may be looked upon as an artist in its own way. By placing ourselves at this point of view, we shall perceive that the object of art is to put to sleep the active as or rather the resistant powers of our personality, and thus to bring us into a state of perfect responsiveness, in which we realize the idea that is suggested to us and sympathize with the feeling that is expressed.....If musical sounds affect us more powerfully than the sounds of nature, the reason is that nature confines itself to expressing feelings, whereas music suggests them to us. Whence indeed comes the charm of poetry? The poet is he with whom feelings develop into images, and the images themselves into words which translate them while obeying the laws of rhythm. (paraphrase....not poss. without rhythm to lull us into self-forgetfulness....hypnotic effect of repeating rhythm.....) Thus art aims at impressing feelings on us rather than expressing them; it suggests them to us, and willingly dispenses with the imitation of nature when it finds some more efficacious means. Nature, like art proceeds by suggestion, but does not command the resources of rhythm. It supplies the deficiency by the long comradeship,.....

Figure B- 1 Passage typed from Henri Bergson's *Time and Free Will*, pages 11 and 14. Earle Brown, typed personal notes, n.d., Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

It follows from this analysis that the feeling of the beautiful is no specific feeling, ~~experienced-by-us~~ but that every feeling experienced by us will assume an aesthetic character, provided that it has been suggested, and not caused. But the merit of a work of art is not measured so much by the power with which the suggested feeling takes hold of us as by the richness of this feeling itself: in other words, besides degrees of intensity we instinctively distinguish degrees of depth or elevation.....If the art which gives only sensations is an inferior art, the reason is that analysis often fails to discover in a sensation anything beyond the sensation itself..... The successive intensities of the aesthetic feelings thus correspond to changes of state occurring in us, and the degrees of depth to the larger or smaller number of elementary psychic phenomena which we dimly discern in the fundamental emotion.

Figure B- 2 Passage typed from Henri Bergson's *Time and Free Will*, continuation of page 14. Earle Brown, typed personal notes, n.d., Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

Novelists are increasingly tending to
abandon the pretence of reproducing
reality, and instead look for techniques
that will best evoke the emotional
feel of it. (Mendelow)

Encouraged by him (novelist) we have
put aside for an instant the veil
which we interposed between our
consciousness and ourselves. He has
brought us back into our own
presence. (Bergson *Time + Free Will*)
Pg 132-134

Figure B- 3 Handwritten page of notes with quotes from "Two Aspects of the Self," in Henri Bergson's *Time and Free Will*. Earle Brown, handwritten personal notes, n.d., Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

Feb. 12 '66
Earle

Dear John — thanks for ltr. and I had heard
from Paul about the mss. thing but didn't know
what to send. Everything I've written over here
(Countdown (3 pms), Golden Piece (Pm. Qtt) and String (Qtt.)
have all been "scored" by a ~~collage~~ collage-post-up
process which results in rather large pages which
must be photo reproduced — (no transparent master-
sheets, except of the "generalized" material which is
collaged) — these collages will have to go to
AMP for printing before I can let them go. The
"original masters" of everything else are either at the
apt. or AMP. What I have here are some of the
original sketches of the materials in Av. Fms. II,
which are more "interesting" visually than the final
scoring, I think — sketchy drawings, notes, comments
to myself, false starts, etc. — better than a
"finished" thing, as rehearsals are more full of life
than performances (usually — unfortunately) — anyway,
I think this might be what you want — I
hope that there are in the "spirit" of the collection.
I will photo-copy for me and send you the final
originals —

Figure B- 4 Earle Brown, to John Cage, 12 February 1966, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. First page.

2. suggest: - (to find addresses:-
 Don't know address of Amy (Boucauchiev, 33 rue St. Didier, Paris 16)
 " " " " Celanne (Thys, 12 rue E. Claus, Brux 5)
 " " " " Râmaki (c/o Universal Ed., Vienne) (he works there)

Evangelisti, via Servio Tullio 25, Rome
 Maderna, Adolf Spiess strasse 5, DARMSTADT

How about: - Xenakis, 29 rue Clauzel, Paris 9
 Meriæen, ??
 Rzewski (?) Reynolds (?) etc (I imagine you've covered all this)

Haven't seen Tobey yet but certainly will - I lectured in Basel a couple of wks. ago and invited him but he didn't come - (anti society, I hear) I'll call on him ^{groups}

alone someday. I just got back from Stockholm and went now so to Köln, then Yugoslavia, then England then Köln, then Holland etc etc so I don't know when I'm here again for long enough.

General plan to return to US in April, or something - who knows? certainly not me!

(How's by Marty incidentally - How's by you?
 not incidentally - Miss. follows; like, quickly
 be well and enjoying,
 Earle

Figure B- 5 Earle Brown, to John Cage, 12 February 1966, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York. Second page.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Is there an artist, an oeuvre, a single work or a certain stylistic direction of art having inspired your creative work?

Symbolism
Surrealism
Abstract Expressionism

Alexander Calder
Jackson Pollock
Bob Rauschenberg
(Karl Gustav)

Figure B- 6 First question in a questionnaire about the importance of visual arts on music, completed by Earle Brown. Earle Brown, questionnaire, n.d., Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

2) Could you point out your personal experiences with such encounters?

Influenced in:
1945 - Symbolist writings
46-47 Surrealist writings + work
(Breton, Ernst, Tzara)
49-50 Personal meeting with Max Ernst + Dorothea (Sedona, Arizona)
49-50 first reading and seeing about Pollock, DeKooning, Klein, Guston, Rottko, etc.
52-55 meeting personally the above N.Y. artists, as well as Rauschenberg, Johns, Oldenburg, Stella, etc.
Then and now, close friends with Rausch, Johns, Cage, etc.
(see enclosed material: - "Calder Piece" (La Barba and Doni Alden) etc. — see underlined.)

Figure B- 7 Second question in a questionnaire about the importance of visual arts on music, completed by Earle Brown. Earle Brown, questionnaire, n.d., Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

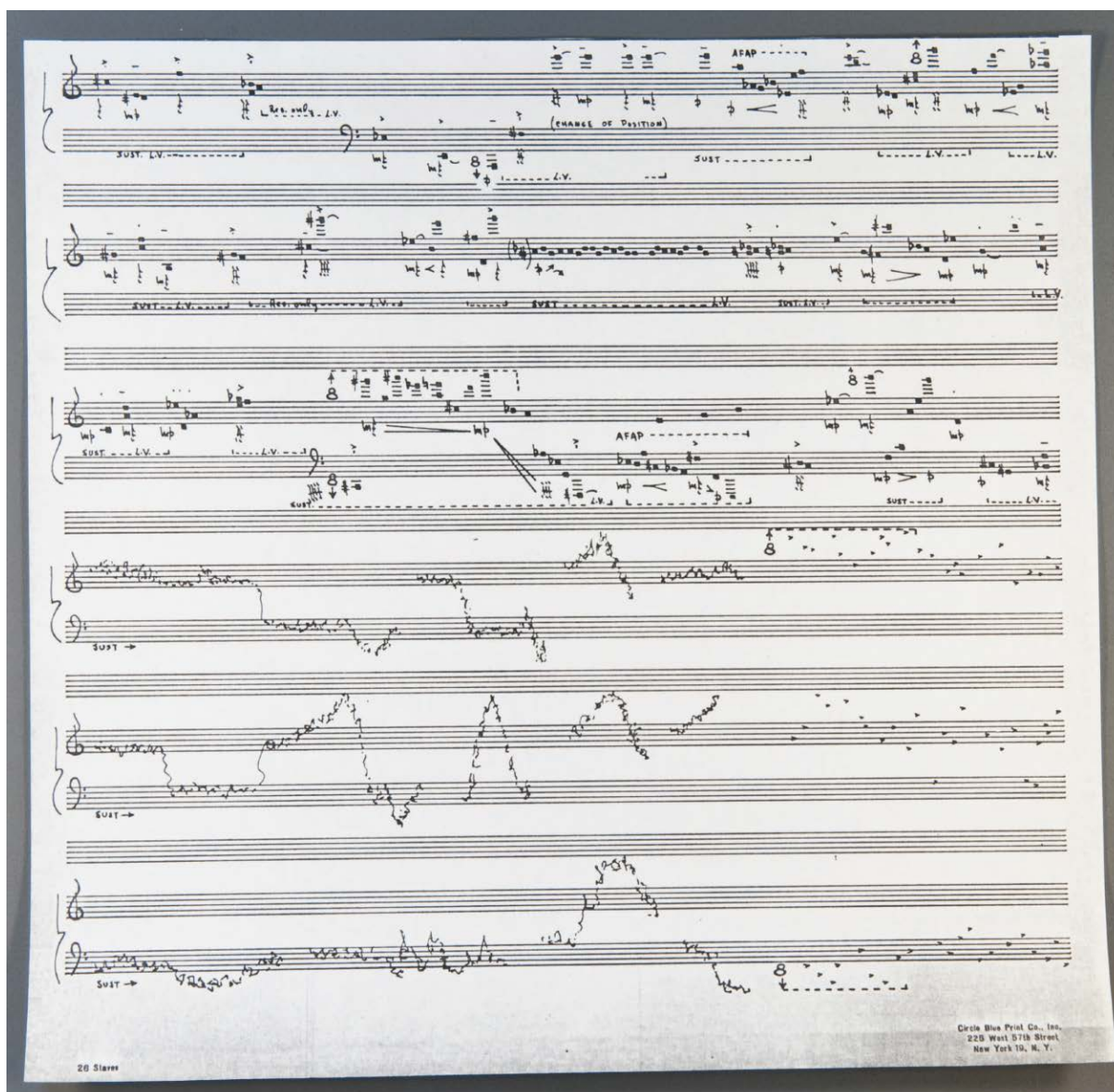


Figure B- 8 Pre-compositional material for *Corroboree* by Earle Brown. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

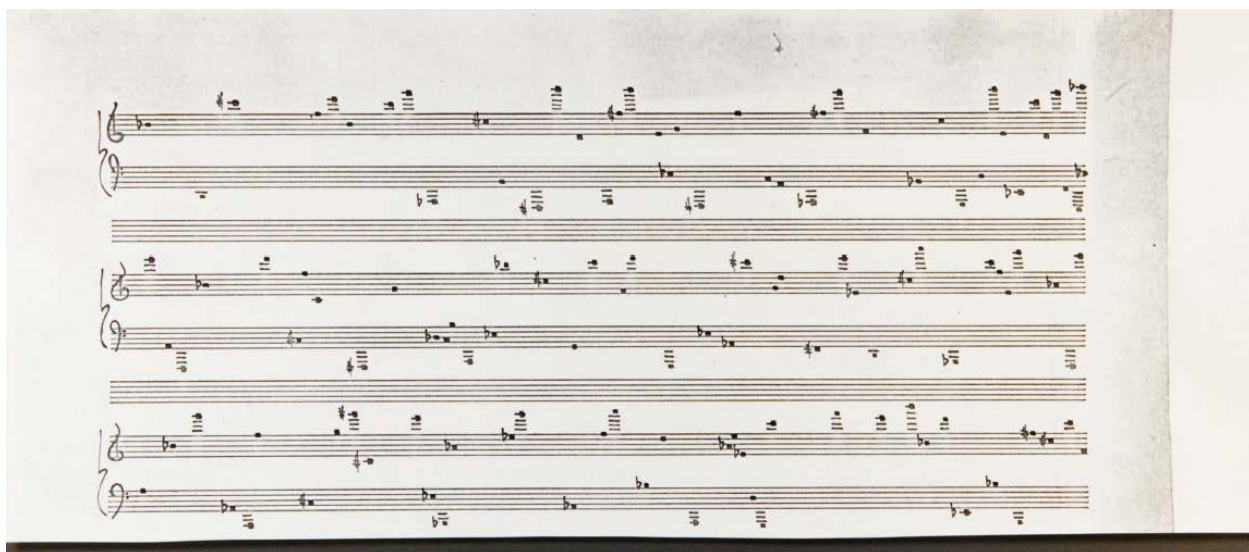


Figure B- 9 Pre-compositional material for *Corroboree* by Earle Brown. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

This image shows another page of handwritten musical notation for 'Corroboree' by Earle Brown. It also features three systems of staves, each with a grand staff and a single bass staff. The notation is highly complex, with many beamed notes and rests. A double bar line is visible in the middle of each system. In the bottom right corner, there is a small printed mark: 'Circle Blue Print Co., Inc. 225 West 57th Street New York 19, N. Y.' In the bottom left corner, the text '20 Staves' is printed.

Figure B- 10 Pre-compositional material for *Corroboree* by Earle Brown. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.



Figure B- 11 Pre-compositional material for Earle Brown's *String Quartet* used as collage material for the third page of *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

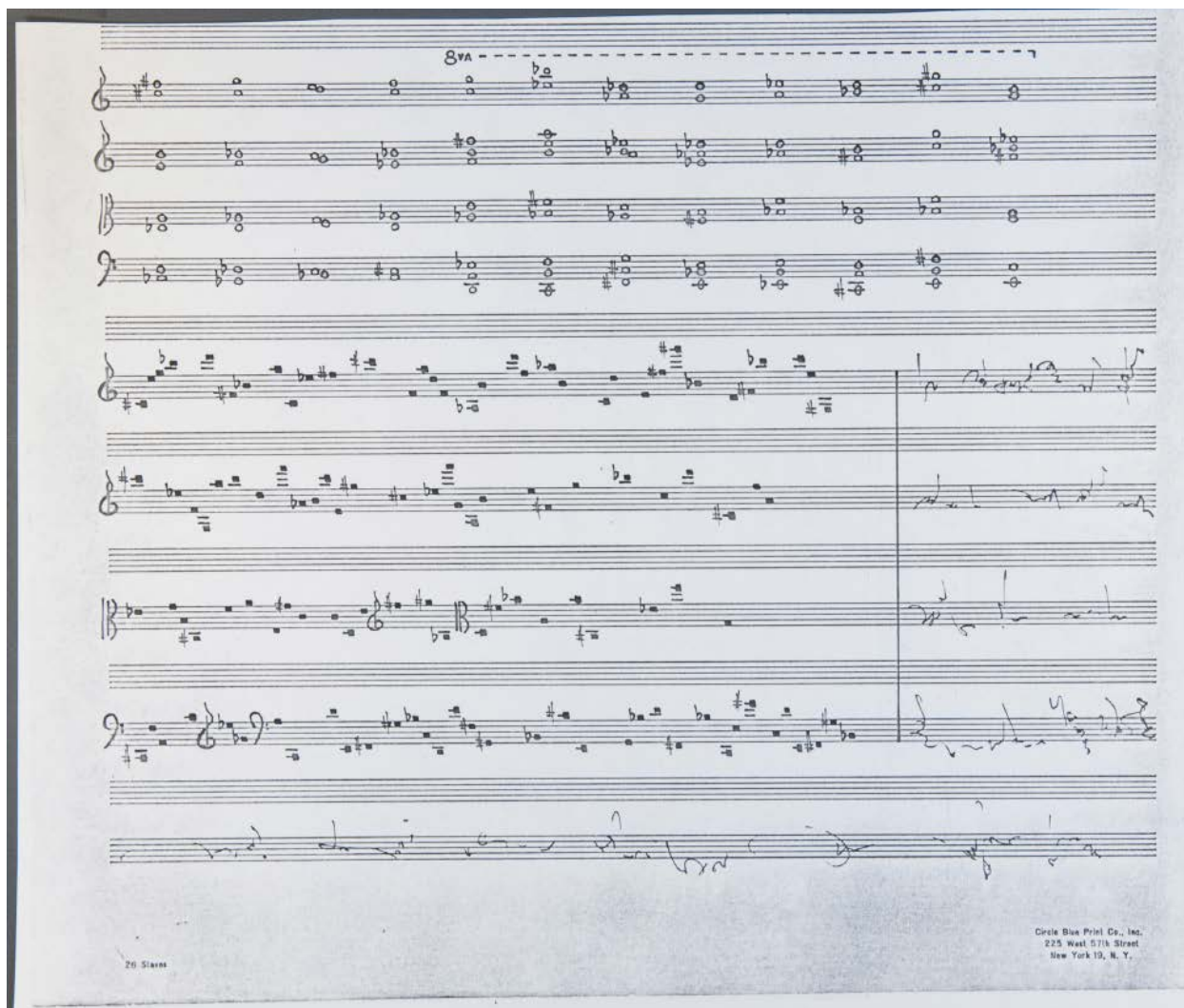


Figure B- 12 Pre-compositional material for Earle Brown's *String Quartet* used as collage material for the third page of *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

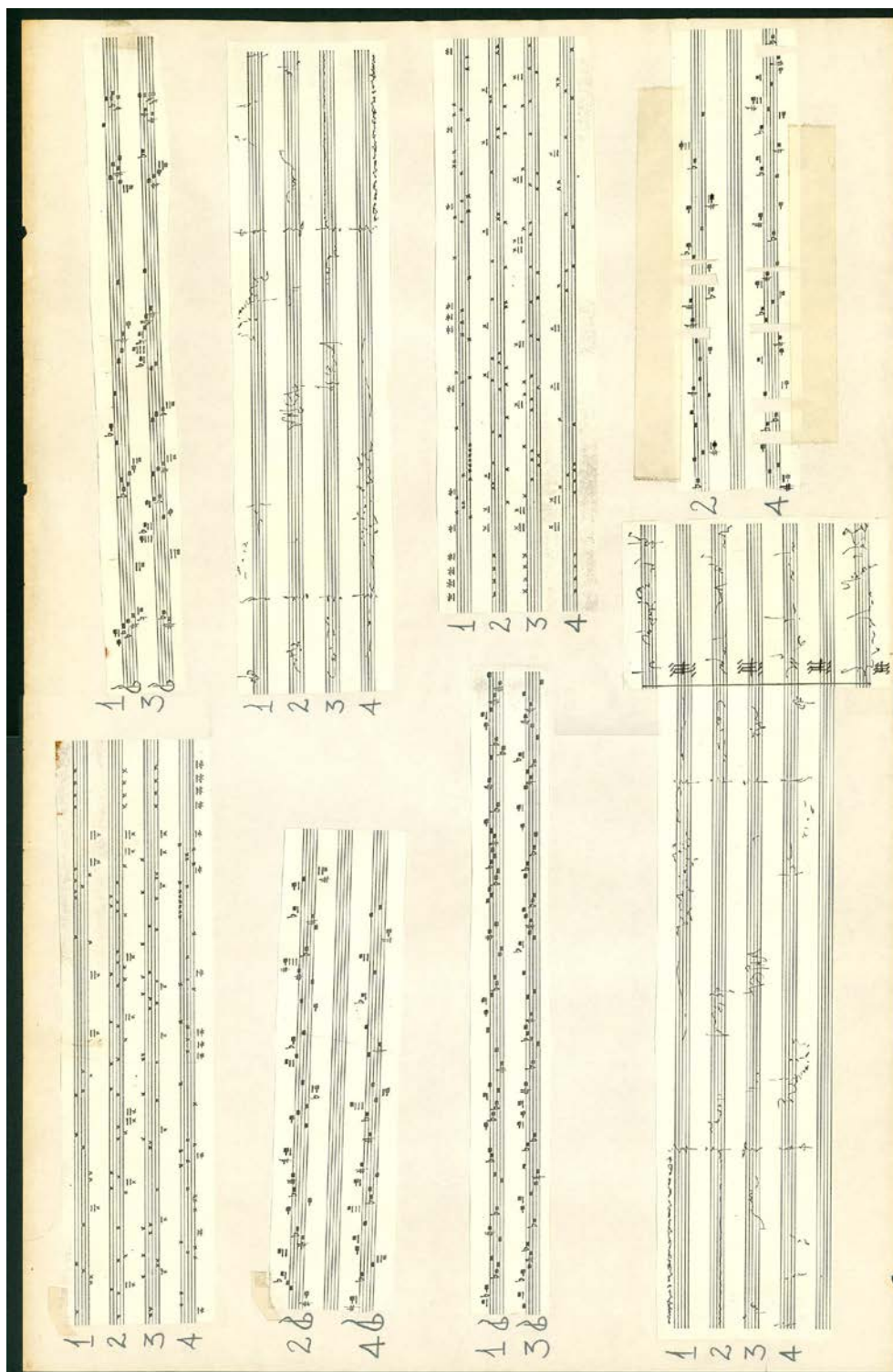
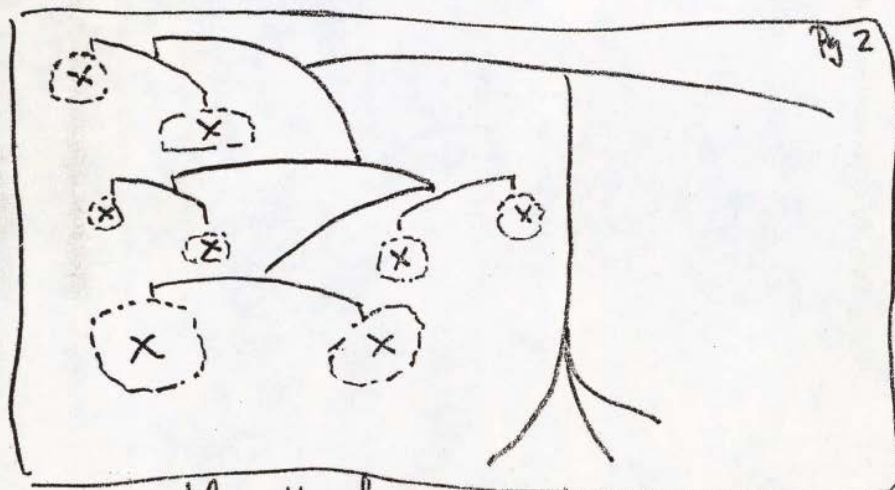


Figure B- 13 “Collage sketch” of page three of *Calder Piece*. Brown pasted each system of pre-compositional material from the *String Quartet* onto this page. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

to MOBILE:—

at end pg. 1 — friction to light striking
("wrong" end of sticks, etc.
80% friction, as in
metal to wood to skin seg.

Pg. 2 "Read" (visualize) the mobile in it's various
(at indicated pitched instr.) changing relationships, as it is moving
and then at rest, superimpose the
relationships of the mobile elements
over the field of notes and play the
figures that the mobile visualization
covers.



X = play the figures in those areas in any seg.

Figure B- 14 First page in Brown's manuscript draft for his "Directions for Performance." Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

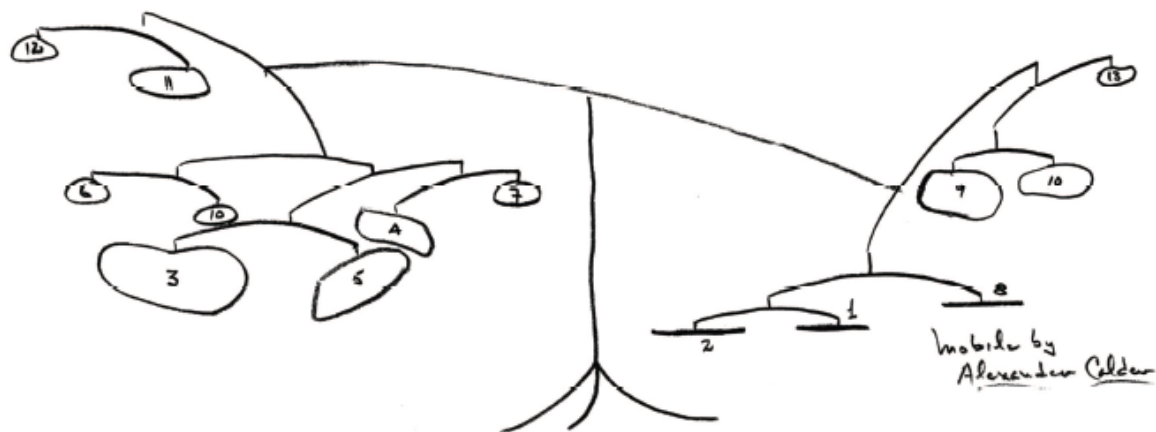


Figure B- 15 Drawing of Calder's mobile on the first page of the performance score for *Calder Piece*. Drawing by Earle Brown. Earle Brown, *Calder Piece*, annotated score, Jan Williams Collection of Annotated Scores, Mus. Arc. 10.1, Item 14, 3.

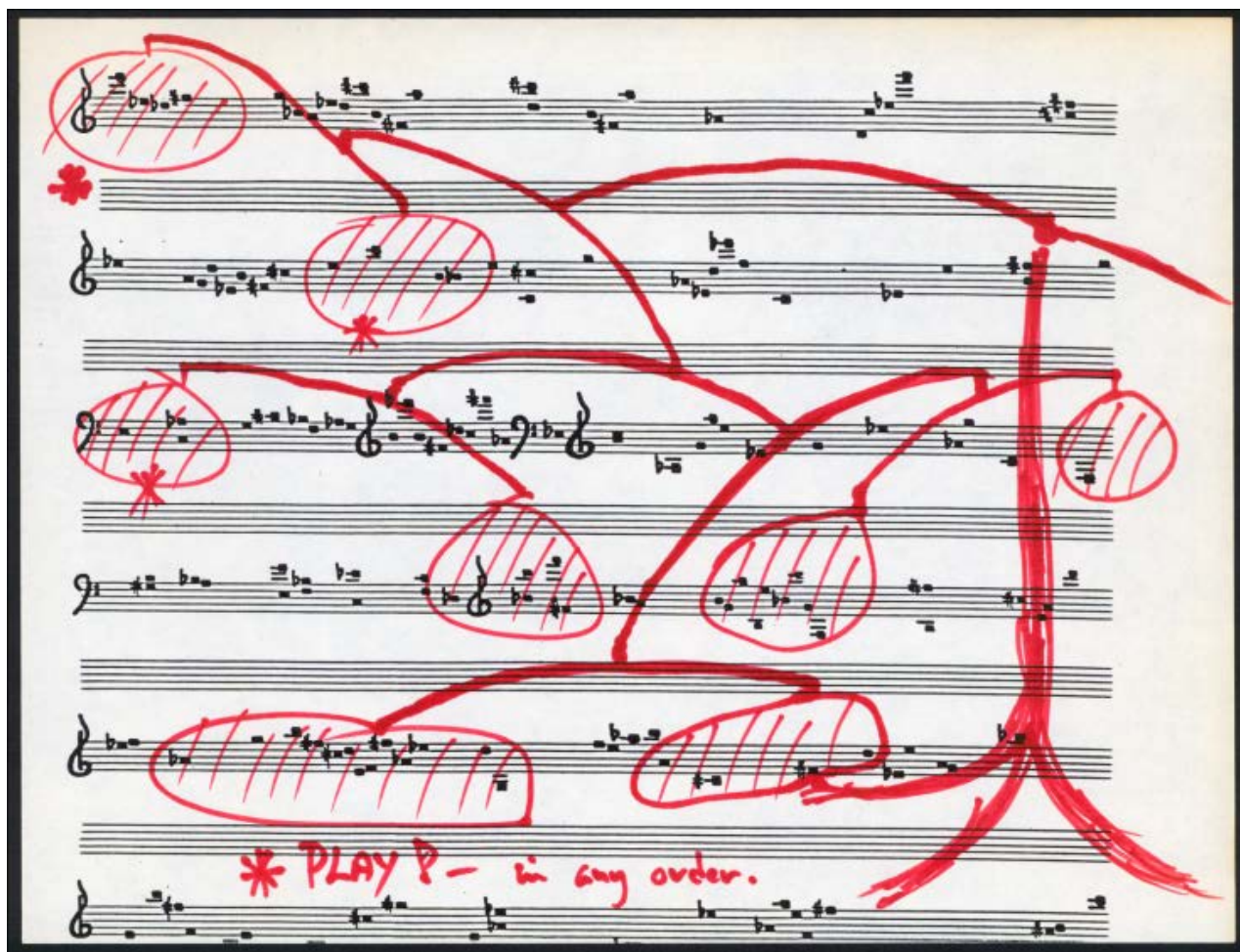


Figure B- 16 Second image of the mobile sketched for page 2 in the “Directions for Performance” for *Calder Piece*. Sketch by Earle Brown, directly onto a copy of the second page of the score for *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

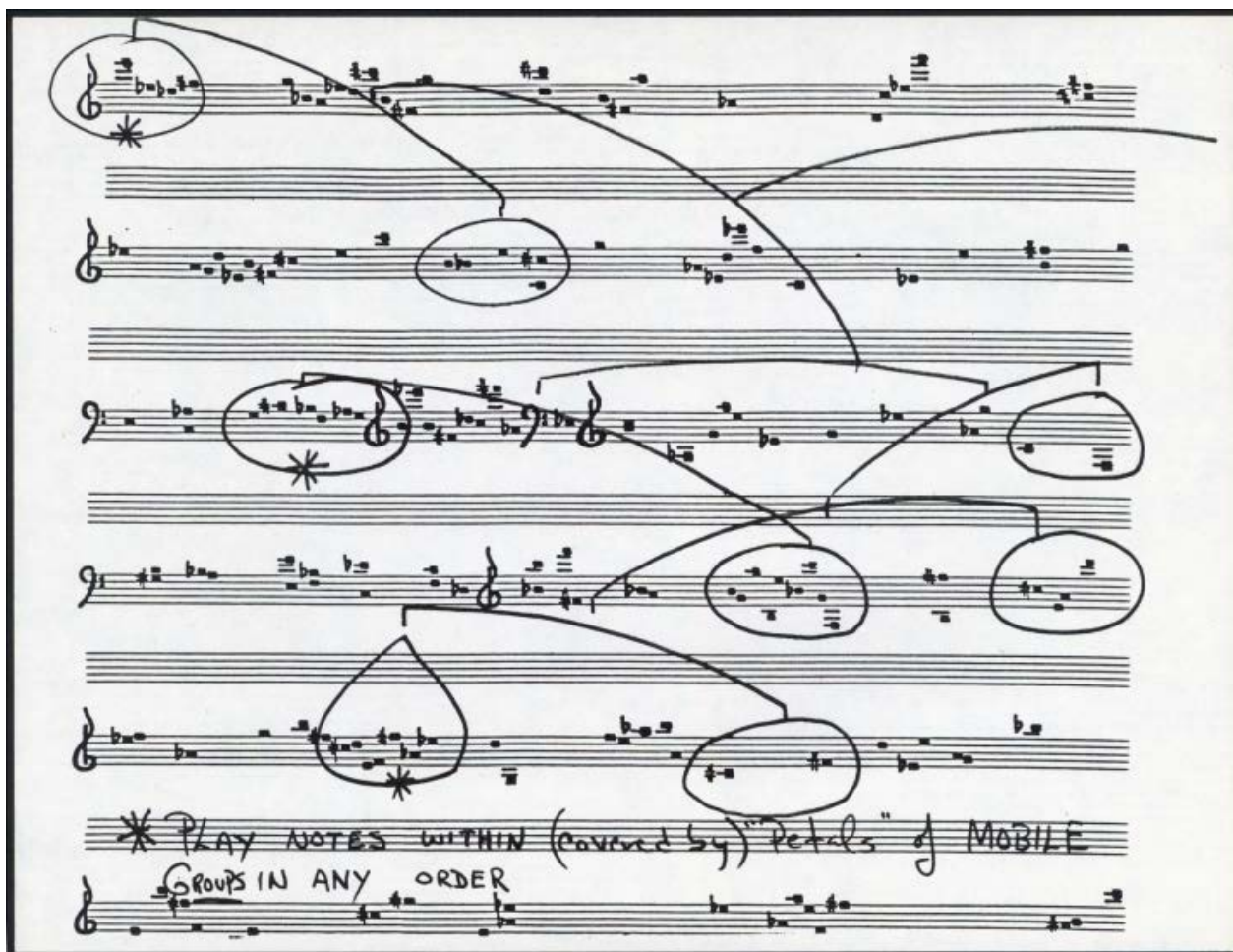


Figure B- 17 Third image of the mobile sketched for page 2 in the "Directions for Performance" for *Calder Piece*. Sketch by Earle Brown, directly onto a copy of the second page of the score for *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, pre-compositional material, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

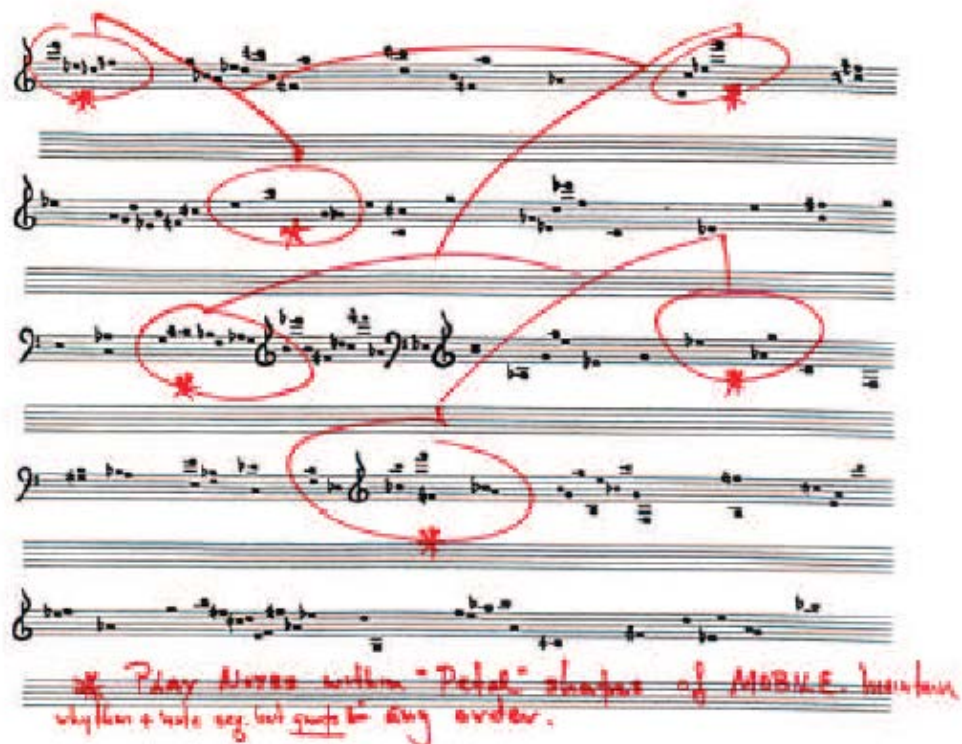


Figure B- 18 Final version of the mobile sketched for page 2 in the “Directions for Performance” for *Calder Piece*. Earle Brown, “Directions for Performance,” *Calder Piece*, 1963-1966, unpublished version of the score, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

Handwritten musical score for Percussion 2 part of *Calder Piece*, complete part, p. 2. The score is written on 14 staves. The first staff is marked "xylo" in orange. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. There are handwritten annotations in orange and black ink, including "READ" and "moving MOBILE".

Annotations on the left side of the page:

- xylo
- READ
- moving MOBILE
- 1 - 4 - 2
- 2 - 1 - 4
- 3 - 2 - 1
- 4 - 3 - 2
- 5 - 4 - 3
- 6 - 5 - 4
- 7 - 6 - 5
- 8 - 7 - 6
- 9 - 8 - 7
- 10 - 9 - 8
- 11 - 10 - 9
- 12 - 11 - 10
- 13 - 12 - 11
- 14 - 13 - 12

Annotations on the right side of the page:

- READ
- moving MOBILE
- 1 - 4 - 2
- 2 - 1 - 4
- 3 - 2 - 1
- 4 - 3 - 2
- 5 - 4 - 3
- 6 - 5 - 4
- 7 - 6 - 5
- 8 - 7 - 6
- 9 - 8 - 7
- 10 - 9 - 8
- 11 - 10 - 9
- 12 - 11 - 10
- 13 - 12 - 11
- 14 - 13 - 12

Figure B- 19 Percussion 2 part of *Calder Piece*, complete part, p. 2. Earle Brown, performance part, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

Handwritten musical score on ten staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The score is written in a cursive, handwritten style. The title "HAPPY" is written in large, bold letters at the top left. The number "2" is written in the top right corner. The text "NINETEEN MUSICAL STAGES OF DOCUMENT" is printed vertically along the right margin. The text "A and the First Chapter, Part 2" is printed vertically along the right margin. The text "HAPPY" is written in large, bold letters at the top left. The number "2" is written in the top right corner. The text "NINETEEN MUSICAL STAGES OF DOCUMENT" is printed vertically along the right margin. The text "A and the First Chapter, Part 2" is printed vertically along the right margin.

Figure B- 20 Percussion 3 part of *Calder Piece*, complete part, p.2. Earle Brown, performance part, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

[illegible]

Figure B- 21 Percussion 2 part of *Calder Piece*, incomplete part, p. 2. Earle Brown, performance part, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

Handwritten musical score for Percussion 2 part of *Calder Piece*, complete part, p. 5. The score is written on ten staves, with handwritten notes and markings in red, blue, and green ink.

Handwritten Notes and Markings:

- Top Left:** "vibes to xylo" (red ink)
- Top Right:** "Vibes to xylo" (blue ink)
- Bottom Left:** "READ" moving MOBILE - only on Pitched Instr. (red ink)
- Bottom Right:** "After all time when from Mob. 20' ft up" (red ink)
- Bottom Right:** "free dy. + Register" (red ink)

The score includes various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings, with some sections marked with "2" and "3" in blue ink.

Figure B- 23 Percussion 2 part of *Calder Piece*, complete part, p. 5. Earle Brown, performance part, n.d., *Calder Piece* drawer of performance scores, Earle Brown Music Foundation, Rye, New York.

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